



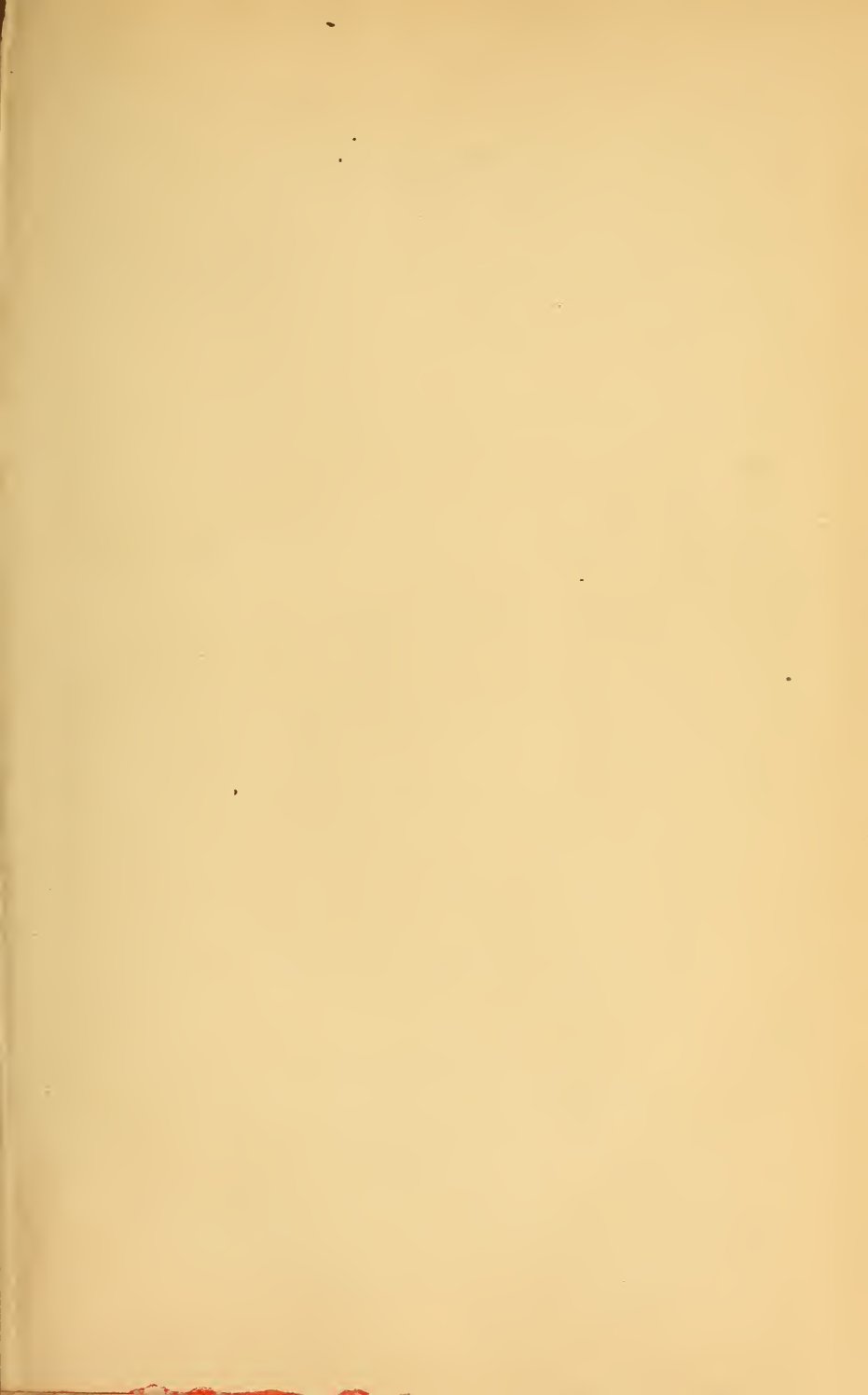
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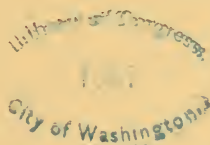
THE STEEL OF TRUTH AND WINGED BY FAITH
AND LOVE.

SELECTED FROM THE PRIVATE PAPERS OF

REV. JAMES CAUGHEY.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

REV. DANIEL WISE, D. D.



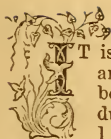
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.



T is now twenty years since the writer made his first acquaintance with the Rev. JAMES CAUGHEY, and his very remarkable labors as a revivalist. After carefully observing Mr. C.'s methods during a revival in Providence, R. I., and in Fall River, Mass., I felt convinced that a republication of the best portions of his journals and letters, which had already appeared in England, could not fail of doing great good in this country. Guided by this conviction, I prepared a volume for the press, under the title of "Methodism in Earnest," and, in connection with the Rev. R. W. Allen, gave it to the public. Its success was immediate and complete. Thousands of copies were rapidly sold, and very soon I heard from many ministers, assuring me that the book had greatly quickened their own souls, and given them new insight into the philosophy of Scriptural revivals. They also assured me that the circulation of the book had been followed by a powerful work of God in their stations and circuits.

Confirmed by these facts in my original convictions, and encouraged by the large sale of the first volume, I made further selections from Mr. Caughey's published writings and from his manuscripts, which were also published by myself and Mr. Allen, under the titles of "Revival Miscellanies," "Earnest Christianity Illustrated," &c. The sale of these volumes was immense, and they were productive, as I was repeatedly assured, of glorious revivals of religion in many places.

In obedience to the call of the church, I came to this city nearly twelve years since, and, as required by the discipline, withdrew my connection with the publication of books. My dear friend, Mr. Allen, continued the business, and brought out still other volumes from Mr. Caughey's fertile pen, which also met with great favor from the religious public.

Meanwhile, Divine Providence kept open effectual doors for Mr. Caughey in England, where he remained for several years, laboring with his wonted success. At length it appeared to him that his future field of labor would be in this country. He returned, and a few weeks since I was agreeably surprised to see his face in my office. He informed me that he was about to issue two new volumes of selections from his journals and papers, and requested me to read them, to introduce them to the public, especially to the readers of his former works, and to render him some other trifling aids in bringing them through the press.

Though crowded, even to burdensomeness, with official work, I nevertheless consented, for the sake of "auld lang syne," to do so. I read his manuscripts, and now take great pleasure in commending this and its companion volume to the favorable consideration of the children of God.

In "Glimpses of Life in Soul Saving,"* Mr Caughey largely portrays the inner life of a revivalist. In this he deals with the external obstacles which impede the progress of a revival, and grapples vigorously, in his own peculiar style, with the objections of enemies, opposers, and critics of all classes. His pertinent replies to his objectors give character and value to this volume. The objections he meets are not put as found in books, but as they were sent to him in notes, letters, and newspaper articles while engaged in soul saving. Consequently, if not new—and there is nothing really new to be found in any of the modern objections to Christianity or its workers—they are fresh and unique in form. The style of Mr. Caughey's replies are also *unique*, as well as pertinent and conclusive.

These objections and replies include a wide range of questions relating to the operations of truth on unregenerate minds, and on awakened sinners; they also teach numerous points of Christian experience and Christian worth. These subjects are treated pointedly but discursively. They are put so as to be really instructive and very entertaining. Frequently solid arguments are found closely packed in small nutshells. They are often adorned with brief, telling quotations from known and rare authors. They are, as the title of the book implies, *sharp* arrows fitted to strike home to the heart of the adversaries of the kingdom of God.

I do not recommend the style and method of this book as models for others to imitate. In fact, no man can be a mere imitator without destroying his *individuality*—the thing out of which, above all others, his personal power grows. Mr. Caughey's individuality is strongly marked in his writings, and any man trying to do and say things as he says and does them, would probably spoil himself. But while the peculiar style and method of this book should not be imitated, they may prove very suggestive, and may furnish much valuable material for the use of Christian workers. Many of its arrows may be made to fly from *their* bows.

Finally, this is a living book. Its author was baptized with the tongue of fire long ago, and his pen was moved by a soul which felt the divinity of the truth when he wrote. The Christian reader will recognize, in the life breathing from these pages, the counterpart of that which was breathed into his own soul when, through faith, he first touched the cross of Jesus and felt his heart strangely warmed. Believing this book likely to be the means of stirring up multitudes to work for Jesus with renewed zeal, I commend it to the religious public.

DANIEL WISE.

ENGLEWOOD, N. J., Nov. 26, 1867.

* Just issued by W. C. Palmer, Jr.

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ARROWS FROM MY QUIVER.

CHAPTER I.

EXPLANATIONS TO A HEARER.—PULPIT ARCHERY.

REACHERS differ in their manner. This is as it should be. To be true to nature, our style of preaching should, perhaps, be as dissimilar as are our faces. Mine, I suppose, is no exception. My manner differs not only from others somewhat, but is not generally in harmony with itself: thus the style of to-night's discourse (after making a few explanations) will differ, likely, from that of last night; and that of to-morrow night, if spared, may be as unlike both as possible. Much depends upon circumstances. The same may be said of my replies, and other remarks before taking my text from night to night, and of exhortations in prayer-meetings. Such variations and inequalities are unavoidable. Hearers, not comprehending the causes, are perplexed, and provoked to criticism.

On my return to America in 1847, when ascending the Hudson River on board one of our steamers, I was looking over a volume of my Letters (which had been published in England), not having had an opportunity of doing so since it

came from the press. An old farmer, noticing my name in print at the top of the page, said, "Caughy? do you know him?" "Yes, I have some acquaintance with him." "I heard him preach, a number of years ago, in the city of Hudson." After making a few remarks, he concluded with, "But his style is not equal, sir; his style is unequal." That is, I suppose, not uniform—different at different times, and, in his estimation, falling much below itself—which I thought a pretty fair criticism. The old gentleman did not recognize me, as I had spent a number of years in Europe. It was but fair I should remain *incog.*, and we parted good friends. Now, I confess, this is saying a great deal about myself; but as explanations have been required, I hope the apparent egotism will be excused.

But let us proceed. In ancient times *archers* had two sorts of *bows*: 1st, the *long-bow*, which required much strength of arm, and from it the arrow went forth in accordance with the strength of him who used it. 2d, the *cross-bow*; from this the arrow went with the same force, whether shot by a boy or a giant. Lord Bacon, I remember, uses this fact as an illustration of the difference between *Assertion* and *Argument*. Assertion he compared to an arrow from the *long-bow*, depending mainly upon the strength of intellect, and conviction of its truth, in him who projects it; but it requires more force. Argument he represented as an arrow from a *cross-bow*, which, if rightly directed, is of the same force, whether shot by a common or a giant intellect. And yet the sage would not have objected to a hint, that much depended upon the judgment in both classes of archers, whether the arrow went home directly to the mark or not.

Well, sir, it is true, I deal sometimes in assertion, and sometimes in argument, but never in the former unless capable of being sustained by argument; but, taking it for granted that argument is uncalled for, I draw the *long-bow*, and let the arrow fly with the utmost of my strength. That such arrows reach the mark, now and then, the cries of the wounded attest most convincingly. Thus the work is accomplished without argument, although I would not say that argument, like a John the Baptist, has not been the forerunner to prepare the way for the arrow of assertion.

I use the word assertion in the sense of an *undebatable* and *positive truth*—that which commends itself at once to the common sense of my hearers, as well as to their understanding and conscience. And many such truths there are in the doctrines and morals of religion, and in the lives of those who hear, you must be very well aware. My quiver is usually full of these during a revival, and therefore the long-bow of assertion is called most frequently into use, greatly to the annoyance of some that have no liking to come within the range of arrows from that bow. My quiver, I have said, is full of them, and, if not “polished shafts,” they are “rough and ready,” and *sound* withal—pointed with the steel of truth, and tipped with fire. And so, tossing my argumentative shield and *cross-bow* over my shoulder, and giving the fear of man to the winds, the arrows, one by one, are placed at the disposal of my *long-bow*, and sent forth with all the force my strength, united with the strength the living God supplies at the moment, with a sure and certain faith of their going straight to the mark, piercing through joints and marrow, through soul and body, through the very thoughts of the heart, clear into the quivering conscience,

and there sticking fast, till the hand of Jesus draws them forth, and heals the wounds of the weeping and agonizing sinner.

The deepest humility accompanies all this, which, if not so evident amidst the blaze of zeal and faith, is immediately so on retiring to the footstool of God in secret. Diminished congregations for a time, after such a conflict, or professors siding some with those who have taken offence, deprecating "such extravagance and imprudence," are apt to bring a large increase of humiliation. If the conversion of many has been the result, it does not distress me; but, if the results do not appear, then is my soul burdened indeed. Oh! what seasons of conflict, and power, and victory I have had with my *long-bow*!—ay, and of humiliation also.

But the *cross-bow* is sometimes brought into action, and, consequently, the quiver where the argumentative arrows are deposited. *Argument* is an arrow from this bow—a *reason*, or a *series of reasons*, in support of a debatable or disputable point.

A single *proposition* may require many of these arguments. A *proposition* attributing some quality, negative or positive, to the subject on hand; some affirmation requiring proof, when skeptics demand it or weak believers need it—this must not be withheld. I have seen some fine effects and lasting convictions resulting from the *cross-bow* arrows. Even as in the case of that skeptic who said, "Cleverly done! a fine fellow that; made the best of his argument; almost, but not quite, convinced; shall hear him again." Well, even that is worth something; it may be the forerunner of better things. But determined opposers, who need the *earthquake* that awakened the Philippian jailor to arouse them, or a *storm* such as that

which vindicated the claims of God upon a Jonah, or *red-hot thunderbolts*, such as those to which Israel's God gave the flocks of the Egyptians, in days of old, as David tells us: these laugh at the whole affair of *cross-bow* argument, and set out from the house of God for a glass of grog, a jug of ale, and a game at cards, or something worse, and think no more of it. The *long-bow* arrows are the best for these gentlemen. Do you understand me?

My aiming so directly at the *mark*, renders such spiritual archery so very intolerable. True, it is the *manner* of projecting the arrows which seems to provoke *criticism*. But that is not the difficulty; the provocation is that the arrow is aimed at a *mark*, and actually hits it! Were the humble archer but to aim at some imaginary character, sitting away upon some distant rock of Asia, or at the clouds, or higher yet, the stars, *criticism* would be amused and quiet, as a *snake* I once tried to charm by whistling to it, but the moment I stopped whistling, he eyed the cudgel in my hand, and darted out his fang like the forked lightning! so I concluded to let him alone, if he would let me alone, and both of us went our ways; and I thought if I could but treat sinners in this way, the carnal mind and myself might be on better terms; at least the severity of criticism might be avoided. But men have souls, and snakes have none; therefore, neither they nor myself have much peace these days.

A criticism one levelled at the writings of Plato, may not be amiss here: that *Plato* drew a good *bow*; but, like *Alcestes* in Virgil, he aimed at the stars; and, therefore, though there was no want of strength or skill, the shot was thrown away. His arrow was indeed followed by a track of dazzling radiance, but

it struck nothing! If my pulpit archery were of this sort, the criticisms of the party in question would be somewhat more lenient, I fancy; but as I cannot be an Alcestes, let me be a *Jonathan*, of whose bow it was said it "*turned not back*," and of his father's sword, it "*returned not empty*." (2 Sam. i. 22.) There are more arrows in the quiver, and they may rely upon it none of them shall be wasted. Amen!

CHAPTER II.

CHRISTIANS DEFENDED.



ET “*one who has had his eyes opened*” make use of his ears for a few minutes, for the stranger trusts he has something to say worth hearing, as you have seen some things worth seeing among professors of religion! A certain poet calls *consistency* a jewel. Would to God that all our people were adorned with it! *That* would tell upon the world much more than the most eloquent preaching! The *loadstone* for its attraction, and the *diamond* for its brilliance. *Christians* should resemble both, as to their attractive qualities and the brilliancy of their graces. We lament that too many are not so. Nevertheless, there are some who possess these engaging properties. Your “*inference*” is a sad one, and dangerous too: “If *Christians* do so and so, why may not I?” A shrewd man proposed the matter thus: “If a professor cuts his finger, I may boldly cut my throat.” You reject the application of the principle to your *body*, and yet seem to have no scruple in applying it to your *soul*? Where is the *consistency* of that?

Imperfection and *fallibility* seem inseparable, in a greater or less degree, from all of us, in the present state. I speak this without intending any apology for sin or avoidable mistakes. There are few books printed in which a critic might not find some material for an *errata*;—few *Christians*, sir, even

among those who are really such, of whom we may not say the same. In most stages of their Christian experience, on re-perusing the pages of the past, they would like to have an author's privilege—to use an idea of Dr. Franklin—to correct, in a second edition of their life, the errors of the first? Those confessions and prayers recorded in the Book of Psalms, are as necessary in our dispensation as in the Jewish: “*If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who should stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*” “*Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.*” “*Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.*” Angels in heaven are exempt from such confessions as these; and so was unfallen Adam in Paradise. These might well refrain from that sentence in the prayer taught us by our Lord, “*Forgive us our trespasses,*” but no Christian who inhabits a house of clay, and whose foundation is in the dust.

You know little, I fear, about the nature of that “*perfection*” which is taught in the New Testament, and which we preach; that it is Christian perfection, and not angelic, nor Adamic; but the loving God with all the heart, and our neighbor as ourselves—so that we would as soon hurt ourselves, or hate ourselves, as willingly or knowingly *do* anything, or *feel* anything of the sort toward our neighbor. “*Love worketh no ill to his neighbor,*” says Paul, and he immediately adds, “*therefore love is the fulfilling of the law;*” ay, both toward God and toward man! (Rom. xiii. 10.) This is the standard of the perfection taught in the New Testament. But the perfection of love does not necessa-

rily imply or include perfection in *judgment*, or in *memory*; therefore we are liable to make many mistakes, and to betray to others and to ourselves many infirmities—either involuntary on our part, or arising from the imperfect medium through which we see and judge of those objects which require our action. All our people who are well instructed upon this doctrine, would as soon deny that they need the merits of Christ every moment, as that there is not a daily necessity of their praying, “*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.*” That they may fall away from this standard of Christian perfection, they are also aware; and that they have need to pray that their Heavenly Father *leave* them not in temptation, else the purest heart among them would become corrupted, and the fairest character tarnished.

This view of Christians should soften your criticisms. The sun himself, sir, is not without his spots, nor the moon. The highest and fairest stars, too, have their twinklings. I am no apologist for Christ-scandalizing and religion-dishonoring professors. God forbid! But the most perfect believers are not without their *faults*; not through a corrupt heart, or wilful disposition to do wrong, but through fallibility of judgment, or defect of memory, or some physical infirmity or other. So far from asserting absolute perfection, either as to the impossibility of falling, or his ever arriving at a point beyond which he can never rise to a higher state of perfection, I rather believe with a shrewd brother, that “he who foots it best to-day, may be found all along to-morrow!”—and with an excellent divine in London, that the most perfect human being in this world, is nothing more than an unfinished sketch of humanity; a creature full of anticipations and pre-assurances of future develop-

ment and eternal perfection. These views have their uses among Christians; as they preserve us from glorying in men, and from trusting in ourselves.

Ah! my friend, when you show me a *beauty* that will not fade, I will show you a Christian that cannot fall! When you find me a *flower* that cannot wither, or a *light* that cannot be eclipsed or extinguished, or a *ship* that cannot be wrecked, or a *tree* which the tempest may not overturn—then may I find you a Christian not liable to such a catastrophe.

Perhaps, your *principles* may prevent you, or your prejudices, from understanding or appreciating my remarks. You have likely studied certain professors more than you have their Bible; *apostasy* more than *theology*; their system of practice more than their system of faith; their faults more than their temptations, and the disadvantages of their position, or education, or constitutional temperament. To give some poor Christians “fair play,” it is necessary you should study these! But, ah! who but God can do that perfectly? Who but God knows how many of these, though often worsted in a *skirmish*, do win the *main battle*? Who but God knows how many of those who keel the rocks and shoals, or are the sport of whirlpools and breakers, in some part of their voyage, do enter the heavenly port at last in safety? I often rejoice at the thought that it is God himself who is to judge us at last, for it is He and He alone who can, who knows all the circumstances of the case. I believe with Burns, and he wrote feelingly, no doubt:

“Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord—its various tone,
Each spring, its various bias:

Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's *resisted*."

Poor human nature!—it is seldom at a stay! And the *light* of God's truth and love in the soul is seen to disadvantage, in consequence of the medium through which it shines, like some revolving lights among the light-houses on the sea-coast, some presenting a *dark side* alternately with a *bright side*; others, a compartment redder than Mars! The glass through which the light shines is the cause; but whether *blank* or *change of color*, he who keeps the light-house knows the fault is not in the light within, but in that which *prevents*, or in the *medium* through which it beams forth. It would betray much ignorance or inattention on board ship, to hear one declaring the light was extinguished in the light-house, or that it was all a glaring red, without thinking worth while to observe the effect of a single revolution! Poor Christians! Jesus tells them, "*Let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven.*" Yet, alas! the effects of the fall are such, we too frequently resemble these revolving lights! The *medium* through which the light shines, dimmed, or discolored by temptations, and the cares of this world, often appears to great disadvantage; especially to such as are not particularly interested to see their *bright side*! But, Israel's keeper never slumbers, nor sleeps—he, and he only, can decide upon the nature of the light within. "*Let your light so shine,*" said Jesus; admitting that there might be *true light* in the soul, and shining withal, yet not in such a manner, or through such a medium, as to bring glory to their

Heavenly Father, or credit to their religion or to their own character. Pity and help us, O most gracious Lord God! thou and thou only knowest all the evil and the good that is in us :

“Jesus! thou knowest my feebleness,
My faults are not concealed from thee ;
To thee and thy dear wounds I flee ! ”

The Church is compared to the moon in the Scripture ; and like the moon, though she has her light from “*the Sun of Righteousness,*” she has her *changes*. Individual Christians are partakers of similar *variations*, on some parts of their orbs, especially to the eyes of persons watching them from different positions, and who are as little versed in the mysteries of Christian experience, as they are, possibly, in the mysteries of astronomy ! The stars in the sky, had they sense, could judge better of the moon than the wisest astronomers, yet the great Creator knows all. Believers can judge better of believers, revolving in orbits nearer to their own, than carnal men, whose centre of gravitation is hell. Angels in heaven, and *the guardian angels* of the weakest and most imperfect of God’s children, know more of them than either of these classes ; but this *Father* in heaven can judge of them better than men or angels, or devils ! Thanks be unto God for this consolation ! A pious man who afterward passed away into the heavens, speaking of some *providences*, and their aspect toward the children of God, made a singular comparison, which I thought applied beautifully to Christians themselves : he compared them to the moon, which has at all times as much *light* as in the full ; but a great part of the bright side is turned to heaven, and the lesser side to the earth ! Can my *hearer* make

the application, and learn to exercise a little more charity, and decide with more modesty regarding Christians?

Grace appears to greater advantage in some than in others. Thus it happens, in the estimation of us poor mortals, which cannot see the heart, that some whom we imagine have much, enjoy but little, and those to whom we impute but little grace, have much; and that in consequence of some peculiarity of habit, or manner. One is naturally amiable, and a little of the love of God will suffice to preserve his sweetness of disposition under circumstances of considerable trial. Whereas, in another of a different disposition, a similar degree of love would not suffice in the hour of temptation; so it is hard to judge righteously of Christians. A shrewd observer hit upon the following method of illustration, or comparison:—The grace of God in one class, is as *water* in a long, narrow-mouthed glass, which seems to be a great deal, when ten times, yea, twenty times as much in a large cistern, is hardly discernible! A little *sugar* will serve well enough for *sweet wines*, but much more is requisite to sweeten that wine that is sharp and harsh!

A remark of a German preacher occurs to me. It was to this effect, that in some "*the new man*" does not attain to such an unlimited superiority over the old, but that under the pressure of seductive and darkening influences, he may again burst his fetters, and manifest his depravity before God and man. The continuation of divine influence is constantly necessary, especially in such as are in an imperfect state of grace, for the overcoming and restraining the remaining life of the old nature. Indeed, in the highest state of grace, divine influence and continual watchfulness are necessary.

As just hinted, some Christians require much more grace

and help from God than others, owing to some constitutional infirmity or circumstance; yet such may be much cared for, and loved of God. It was said of a pious man, by one who knew him well, "He has grace enough for ten men, but scarce enough for himself, owing to the natural badness of his temper!" Indeed, he often, it is said, bewailed his own faults; once to a particular friend, he observed, "My nature is so cross and crooked, that if God had not given me grace, none would have been able to live one day quietly with me." Yet, grace so triumphed over that man's nature, that I believe nobody doubted his piety. At last, the Lord called him home to himself, who knew him better than any of his most charitable friends; and I doubt not, said "Well done!" Blessed be God for the blood and righteousness of Christ, and grace, plenteous grace in him to cover all our sins!

* * * * *

What you state concerning those cases of duplicity, and that deplorable instance of backsliding, is humiliating indeed to the friends of Zion. God is judge. "*Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall,*" is St. Paul's caution. But for the grace of God, thus might it be with the best of his people. We behold only the results of unfaithfulness; the strength of the temptation, and all the circumstances, are known to the Mediator between God and men. Indeed, he could not be such unless it were so. This may account for the fact that such are spared what their fellow-creatures, sinful as well as they, judge them worthy of—if not of hell, yet of the severest *judgments* from heaven.

That certain circles take occasion to run down religion and


all its professors, on their account, is what might be expected. I remember some remarks of Dr. Chalmers on this very subject. I have not his works at hand, but they differ little from the following:

“A few instances of hypocrisy among the more serious of the professors of our faith, serve to rivet the impression among sinners, and give it perpetuity in the world, that all its votaries are hypocrites. One single example of sanctimonious duplicity will suffice, in the judgment of many, to cover the whole of vital and orthodox Christianity with disgrace. The report of it will be borne in triumph amongst the companies of the irreligious. The man who pays no homage to Sabbaths, or to sacraments, will be contrasted in the open, liberal, manly style of all his transactions, with the low cunning of this drivelling Methodistical pretender. And the loud laugh of a multitude of scorners will give force and swell to this public outcry against the whole character of the sainthood.”

What a verification have we had of late! Satan has more to fear for his kingdom at present, than Jesus Christ; and this is an evidence of it.

CHAPTER III.

CHRISTIANS—UNSAFE TO MEDDLE WITH THEM.

T is strange that such a one as —— should set himself up as a critic on Christian morals; and talk as he has done against men whose moral character is unimpeachable; with whom his own character can no more be brought into comparison, than Satan with an angel. This is severe, and here I pause; and yet I feel inclined to copy *verbatim* something far severer from another pen:

“For you to become a public censorer, it is as if the darkest nook in hell should find fault with the moon, that great light of heaven, for those little spots in her face; whereas she is a fair and goodly creature: as if the most loathsome dunghill should challenge the fairest garden for unsavoriness, because there is here and there a weed amidst a variety of other fragrant flowers: as if a worthless lump of dross should censure an angel of gold for want of a grain or two in weight. A lump of sin and dust, damnation and hell, loads with censorious lies that happy soul which, in the fountain of Christ’s meritorious blood, is made far whiter than the snow in Salmon, and fairer than the wool of the sheep coming up from the washing, though some spots and stains of infirmities may cleave unto it, while it yet dwells in a house of flesh and tabernacle of clay.” This character I very willingly dismiss. Violent diseases require

violent remedies, and this may be one of them! If the devil rages too loudly in him, the poor sinner may take the alarm, and he may lose him forever! Mercy knows no stopping-place on this side of hell, in the descending scale of human depravity, if repentance and faith are only allowed to show themselves in the soul!

There are others, with whom I desire to reason before the Lord. Have you never read the warning given by our Lord: "*Judge not, that ye be not judged*"? Especially forbear to judge God's people. Beware how you speak of them. Their Master hears you. To him they stand or fall. If your treatment of them arises from your want of love to Him, you may expect a *rebuke*; some experience this to their sorrow. Besides, you may, ere this, have owed your life to the prayers of some of them. Even now they may, for aught you know, be a *screen* between you and the sword of divine justice. Zoar owed its preservation to Lot, on the day that Sodom received its doom. Some of you who hear me this hour, have been most likely preserved from death and hell by a similar cause. He looks upon his own saints, takes pleasure in them, hears their prayers, and *s pares* you! Were such removed, God might speedily remove you. Have you never read of the stag that was pursued by the hunters, and concealed himself midst the branches of a thicket? Eut, foolish creature, he commenced browsing on the foliage which protected him from the eyes of his pursuers, and on being discovered, he perished. In like manner, God's people, imperfect though they be, are as a screen to you, as the boughs of that thicket to the stag! And yet, would you bite and devour them? Beware how you even *grieve* or *tease* them? They may cry unto God to take

you in hand. And, though they would by no means pray God to dispatch you out of the way into hell, nor even to shorten your days ; yet, they might pray in faith for God to grant them deliverance from their sorrow, and the answer to their prayer might bring a bitter affliction upon you. Better not meddle with them. "*Let the potsherds of the earth strive with the potsherds of the earth :*" but beware how you use God's *jewels*. (Malachi iii. 17.) God himself declares, he that touches them, touches the apple of his eye. (Zech. ii. 8.) And that he keeps them as the apple of his eye. (Deut. xxxii. 10.) If you can conceive how tender you are of your eye, and how careful of the safety of your eyesight, you may judge of the care and protection he affords his people ; how tender he is of their welfare, and how quickly he feels any injury done them.


A few mornings since, I was reading that remarkable *caution* in Exodus (xxiii. 22-24), given by the Lord God Himself, concerning the *widow* or *fatherless child*, not to *afflict* them : "*If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry ; and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.*" A striking passage, is it not ? The secret, likely, of many a desolate household, in the present day. Is God so ready to attend to the cry of such, and will he not hear the cries of his own children, if *afflicted* by those who fear not God ? Mary, Queen of Scots, declared that she feared the fastings and prayers of John Knox and his disciples more than an army of *twenty thousand men* !

In *conclusion* : suppose much of what you insinuate against some be true, it is far from being a "triumphant argument "

against Christianity. A *young man*, indeed, travelling in a stage-coach, was weak enough to think so, and scoffed at the system bitterly, because of the misconduct of some of its professors. One of the company inquired of him whether he had ever known an uproar made because an infidel went astray from the paths of morality. No, he admitted, he had not. The other immediately asked him if he did not see that in making an ado about the unfaithfulness of professed Christians, he was admitting before that company that Christianity is a holy religion, by expecting its professors to be holy; and also, that by his very objection he was actually paying it the highest compliment in his power. The young man was mute, and the company had a theme for silent reflection. This is all I have time to say at present.

CHAPTER IV.

TO ———, REVIVAL PHENOMENA.

ND was not Elijah, the prophet of God, called a *troubler of Israel*? And did not the Roman Catholics call Luther “the Trumpet of Rebellion”? He said well who insisted it was not the Gospel, but men’s corruptions, that bred trouble, just as the foulness of the stomach causes *sea-sickness*. I know the Gospel of Christ is heaving and tossing this community as the sea does a ship and her passengers; and that while some are *sick* enough, and care not if they were thrown overboard, others are well and enjoy it mightily!

“Morn on the waters!—and purple and bright
Bursts on the billows the flushing of light!
O’er the glad waves, like a child of the sun,
See the tall vessel goes gallantly on:
Full to the breeze she unbosoms her sail,
And her pennant streams onward, like hope, in the gale!
The winds come around her in murmur and song,
And the surges rejoice as they bear her along!
Upward she points to the golden-edged clouds,
And the sailor sings gayly aloft in the shrouds!
Onward she glides, amid ripple and spray,
Over the waters—away, and away.
Bright as the visions of youth ere they part,
Passing away, like a dream of the heart!

Who,—as the beautiful pageant sweeps by,
 Music around her, and sunshine on high,—
 Pauses to think, amid glitter and glow,
 Oh! there are hearts that are breaking below!
 All gladness and glory as our ship onward flies,
 Yet chartered by sorrow, and freighted with sighs!”

So it fares on board *The Old Ship of Zion*, at the present time! Never a fairer breeze for the port of Glory than now! But some are sick, and blame this Gospel breeze, and the other elements of its power. Gladness and glory on deck, sir, while some poor hearts are breaking below! To them it seems as if Sorrow has chartered the ship, and they have supplied the *freight!*—“freighted with sighs, and withering thoughts,”—as if drifting toward a desolate shore, where not a friend stands waiting to greet them! Yet they are on board, poor things! and cannot help themselves. There are songs aloft in the shrouds, and cheerful voices on deck; and our ship, like a child of the sea and sun, is pressing on gallantly, over the billows and over the waves! Let those below cheer up! Jesus, the great Physician, is on board! The *spiritual sea-sickness* soon gives way under his treatment! The *inner man* is all wrong, and at war with these Gospel elements. Thus it is with yourself as well as many others. Call for the great Physician, sir! Call for the great Physician!

We have much to praise God for, but nothing in which we glory, save in our Lord Jesus Christ, and his redeeming and saving power. Were we *novices*, we might be *lifted up with pride, and thus fall into the condemnation of the devil.* (1 Tim. iii. 6.) To prevent this, our God has only to allow Satan a longer chain, and there will arise Tobiahs, and Sanballats, and Geshems

enough to keep us humble; or *spiritual conflicts* to lay us low, and give us other matters to think of than vainglory. What I am about to say may be as much a mystery to you as the rest of it: it is the life of *faith* to work for God, and give him all the glory back again, when any good has been accomplished. This is one of its divine and most noble excellencies;—neither to tact nor talent, nor to prayer nor labor, nor to zeal nor holiness, not even to the faith that removes mountains, be glory, but overcoming “*through the blood of the Lamb*, all glory be unto the Lamb, and to him that sitteth upon the throne for ever and ever! Amen!” This is the soul’s centre,—its rest,—its heaven here below.

CHAPTER V.

TO AN OBSERVER—A GREAT QUICKENING.



HERE is a marvellous *quickenings* among the people, I admit; and the effects are marvellous to some. But you and they are only beholding illustrated a striking remark of a Scotch preacher, that “He who shall raise the dead in *church-yards*, can wake dead in *churches*!” The suddenness of this *awakening*, and at a time when there was the least likelihood of any such thing, and this *shaking* among various classes, have affected some as disagreeably, it would seem, as would have this morning’s dawn, had it rushed into noonday with the force and suddenness of an *explosion*! Have they forgotten that it is written, “*For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth*”? (Rom. ix. 28.) We may say of a revival among a people, what one said of sanctification in a single soul: it may be “gradual in preparation, but instantaneous in accomplishment.” Some revivals resemble rivers running underground, unknown to everybody, till they discover themselves. Most revivals of God’s work, I have thought, begin in this secret way. It is no wonder that worldly-minded persons know not what to make of such sudden manifestations. But is

it not marvellous also, that those "good people" of whom you speak cannot discover the tokens of the Lord's wisdom and power, and that they cry not out with the disciples of old, on seeing a multitude of fishes in the net, "*It is the Lord*"? Or that they find it so difficult to allow that God may work just *where*, and *when*, and *how* he pleases!

2. My habit of going to the point at once, direct, when preaching, and not by circles, under cover of much verbiage and art, may constitute, perhaps, the difference. But I mistake the spirit of the age, if the generality of hearers dislike it; especially those who desire to know the truth, the whole truth, as it is. Those who prefer comfort to safety, and have no wish to see the *worst* of their case, prefer a different style; nor need one marvel at that. But God knows what is best for them and for the people; and usually provides it, without asking their leave. The spirit of the age, it has seemed to me, requires something of the kind. We live in an irregular and impetuous age, and it needs some such sort of preaching to cope with it. God knows I have much to humble me as it regards the imperfection of my style, both in writing and speaking. In some degree I am conscious of it, and humbled on that and some other accounts, more than I can express. But *effects* do sometimes comfort, and lift me up out of oppressive humiliation. I wish, and often try to do better, to avoid abruptness, and cultivate a smoother and less rapid style of delivery. But deep convictions of truth, and the value and peril of souls, with intense emotions, seize and carry me headlong into the subject; and it is not till after all is over, that Prudence overhauls me: if the *effects* happen to be such as the doctrine would seem to warrant, I am let off without the

loss of part of my night's rest. This is saying more than I intended; and is, perhaps, part and parcel of my other faults. I was cheered the other day with the remark of one regarding the stately and elegant style of Gibbon the historian,—“keeping step elegantly and in perfect time,”—that a break in the cadence would be the greatest relief, and a false quantity endear the historian more than the most rigid correctness in the world! for, I thought, maybe, after all, something of this in my preaching may serve as good a purpose, through the divine blessing, as the more smooth and polished style which graces much of the eloquence of our times!

3. Nevertheless, it is sweet to reflect that, whether a Paul may plant, or an Apollos water, or a Boanerges thunder, or a Jonathan shoot his arrow, or a Joash smite the ground with a handful of arrows, contrary to all the rules and uses of archery, it is God who giveth the increase. Peter's *hook* and Peter's nets both succeeded, when let down as Christ commanded. The *work* is ours to do, but the *deed* is God's, else all our work is vain. Bede preaching to a heap of stones, and we to a congregation of sinners, without divine help, have equal prospect of success. “I may teach, and you hear, but God must do the deed when all is done,” said a faithful preacher, centuries ago. Aye, the same Lord that opened the heart of a Lydia under the preaching of Paul, and the heart of a jailor by the shocks of an earthquake.

4. Ezekiel, the prophet, is an example of *directness*, when prophesying to “*the valley of dry bones.*” Had “some of our judicious hearers” been present just then, with as little faith in supernatural influence as they seem to have just now, most likely they would have pronounced *him* also “somewhat too

eccentric for good taste, when he stood and cried, "*O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.*" But he would not have varied his mode of address on their account: "*So I prophesied as I was commanded.*" The secret of the effects produced we find in that one short sentence. The result was "*a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.*" (Ezek. xxxvii. 1-10.) Read the whole. Mark the simple directness and the faith of this man of God. Twice he tells us, in those ten verses, "*So I prophesied as he commanded me.*" And the effects were in accordance—a direct response from the bones—a *stirring*, and a *shaking*, and a *sounding*, and a *coming together*, bone to his bone. And, behold, those hitherto dry and dead bones were instinct with the breath of life, clothed with flesh and skin, "*and stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army.*" He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear! Let the messenger of Jesus Christ "*declare the whole counsel of God*" unto the people, in the manner, and with the power, in which he wills it should be declared, and may not similar effects be witnessed among and upon hitherto dead sinners?

Look around you, my *friend*, and what do you behold? The appeal originates not from pride or vanity, but for the glory of God. Look around you. You know in what state these sinners were a few months since, and you see, in some degree, the change that has been effected in them. Sinners, hitherto possessed of torpid consciences, with faculties disjointed, and dispersed from life, from God and godliness, and sepulchred in flesh, sin, and unbelief! Behold the change. Think of how it was effected. An impulse, mysterious as that which stirred the valley of dry bones under the prophet's

voice, has set these dead people in motion—the vivifying energy of the Spirit of God. That was the mysterious impulse. Behold the effects. If not, as yet, “*an exceeding great army,*” yet, were I to ask them to stand on their feet, you would see arise around you a very respectable battalion, lately formed, and belonging to the grand army of Emmanuel.

5. The work of this spiritual resurrection, and regeneration, and enrolment is still going on. A “*breath*” is breathing upon these slain, and is abroad over this great valley of dry bones, more effectual than “*the four winds of the earth ;*” and the arm of our God is not shortened, that it cannot save. Day after day, and night after night, sinners are rising from among the dead. (Ephes. v. 14.) His voice, in the living word, appears as effectual now in awakening such as it shall be on that day when “*The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God,*” reverberating over the startled dead, “*Arise ye dead and come to judgment.*” Let us all bow in reverence before Him who sitteth upon the throne, and before the Lamb of God, who has taken away our sins.

“ He by himself hath sworn :
 I on his oath depend :
 I shall, on eagle wings upborne,
 To heaven ascend :
 I shall behold his face ;
 I shall his power adore,
 And sing the wonders of his grace
 For evermore ! ”

CHAPTER VI.

THE OPPOSITION; OR, HINTS TO "AN OPPOSITIONIST."



IT was said of one of the emperors of Rome that he was careful of what was *done by him*, but careless of what was *said of him*—a good rule for a preacher. “*Do well and bear ill* is written upon heaven’s gates,” said Bradford the martyr. Oh! that God may write the same on the gates of my heart or memory! for, what with the threatening aspects of things in *Conference*,* and *fretfulness* in some classes of hearers, one needs such a continual motto before the eyes, or on the memory, and on the heart.

2. It is good, however, sometimes to know the opinions of an *opposition*, as well as those of *friends*. “A stone in the other pocket” was, perhaps, the next best thing for the coat that sat *awry* on the back of Johnny D——. Had the coat been well put on, or better made, the temptation to deposit the stone might have been absent from the naughty ones, unless the fault lay in Johnny’s anatomical structure. If the fault lay only in the eye of the depositor, to the eyes of others there would have been but little or no difference, probably, in the appearance of the coat, but somewhat to Johnny in the sense of *weight*, though it weighed nothing at all in his judgment. But let that pass. Politian of old said some flattered

* The British Wesleyan Conference.

him, and others slandered him; but he thought neither the better nor the worse of himself for that, no more than he thought himself taller or lower because his *shadow* was longer in the morning and shorter at noon. I sometimes think, also, of the opinion of a good man, now in eternity, regarding what he considered a good foundation for true happiness—to stand *acquitted* by oneself in private, in public by others, and in both by God. Aye; but if one can secure the first and third of these requisites, the absence of the second need not materially affect one's happiness: but, alas! the presence of the second, without the other two, would be a slender foundation for solid happiness. Burns said well:

“ If happiness ha'e not her seat
 And centre in the breast,
 We may be wise, or rich, or great,
 But never can be blest:
 Nae treasures nor pleasures
 Could make us happy lang;
 The heart aye's the part aye
 That makes us right or wrang!”

3. That experience of Paul—oh! that I felt it more deeply than I do!—“*Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?*”—burn not with holy zeal to recover him, and to confirm him in the truth. What tenderness and sympathy! “It goes as much against the heart of a good minister as against the hair of his people, if he say or do anything to their grief,” said a great and good divine of olden times. “It is no pleasure to him to fling daggers, to speak millstones, to preach damnation;” yet he thought Paul's in-

junction should press heavily upon the conscience of every minister: "*The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies* (a quotation from one of themselves); *wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.*" The rebukes were to have a sharp edge, and a piercing point. In doing this, there is danger of hurting the weak; for Satan is ever ready to turn edge or point against the weak and tender of conscience, who, though unfaithful, yet are not worthy of rebukes so severe and cutting. It is said of Zuingle, that usually, after preaching a terrifying sermon, he would close the book, saying, *Bone vir, hoc nihil ad te!*—"Thou good man, I mean not thee!" Richard Baxter, on like occasions, wished certain weak Christians at home, rather than have them present, to apply, "as was their wont," alarming truths to themselves which properly belonged to very different characters in his congregation. Another cautioned himself and others that Christ's *weaklings* must be handled with all tenderness.


4. Satan owes a grudge to such as have lately deserted his standard to become the children of God. Gladly would he raise against them such a whirlwind as destroyed the children of Job, were it not, perhaps, for sending them too soon to heaven, and thus destroy his own hopes of yet dragging them down to hell, or that Jesus forbids him to touch a skin, or a bone, or a life of them. But when *truth*, like a storm, sweeps over a congregation, such as we had the other night, it excites the devil wonderfully, and, were he allowed, I doubt not he would roar like a lion against the flock of Jesus Christ. I have read the remark somewhere that, in those countries where wild beasts are, the *lion* is always loudest in a storm; that his roar never sounds so loud and terrible as in the pauses of the

thunder; and that, when the lightning flashes brightest, the flashes of his cruel eye are proportionably terrible.

5. It is so with the old lion of hell, "*that goeth about,*" as St. Peter declares, "*seeking whom he may devour.*" In the dark, and in the gloomy day, he roars against the children of God, and especially in the pauses of *truth's thunder*, when weak and tried ones have encompassed my paths for advice—have made my place of solitude vocal with their sobs and groans, and inquiries, "What shall I do? what shall become of me? how shall I escape?"—when truth, like a hurricane, rages through the devil's forests, shaking, rending, uprooting, and many an "oak of Bashan" is laid low. Ay, and when "*the trees of righteousness, trees of the Lord's right hand planting,*" are shaken also, think you that the old *lion* of perdition roars not—not, indeed, audibly, but sensibly—to the spiritual ear of many a soul, as ever a lion roared in the ear of the human body? "*Will a lion roar in the forest when he hath no prey?*" inquires the prophet Amos. Will Satan go round about as a roaring lion when there is nothing to devour?

CHAPTER VII.

REVIVAL: TRUTH AND ITS EFFECTS.

E may say of a revival preacher, what one said of godliness: he has many troubles, and many helps against trouble. If certain *young believers* have so soon cast away their confidence, through these terrible appeals to the sinful, it does not prove, in the present instances, "the falsity of their late *professions*," but their *honesty* and *sincerity* of purpose, rather; and that they had forgotten their "*shield of faith*." The *arrows of truth*, as well as "*the fiery darts of the wicked one*," must sometimes be received on that shield, or they may wound the soul.

The *Law* of God is a terrible power. It can neither belie nor deceive, for it is a picture of the Divine mind, and a mirror of his perfections. It will not allow itself to be misunderstood, nor let the hearer escape; as one has feelingly observed: "The lightning that strikes us, flashes upon us at first only from one of the *ten commandments*. We think to save ourselves in the other *nine*, and we cast ourselves, as into a safe fortress, into the *First* command, '*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*' There the spirit pursues and enlightens, as to the nature, depth, and spirituality of this command. Being questioned there, we turn our back on that, and flee to the *Sixth*; but the recollection of ill-temper toward others makes a breach there.

We hasten to the *Ninth*, but have to fly from that, under charge of falsehood, deception, dissembling, or flattery. Conscience has hardly finished its speech, till we fly from that also. No rest can we find in the *Seventh* command; but conscience retrospects the thoughts, and the desires, and inclinations of the heart; and we flee from that command as from a fire that consumes us. The *Fifth* affords no security, for the sin of *covetousness* approaches to arrest us. In the *Eighth*, the accusations of father and mother. The *Tenth* strips us of every thing; terminating the whole process by a general condemnation. Miserable man that I am! I am already condemned, and accursed, lost! ‘*Thou art the man!*’ resounds on every side, and it seems as if the very walls, and joists, and beams cry out the same. A thousand reminiscences of past transgressions crowd around like avenging spirits exclaiming, ‘*Thou shalt surely die!*’ Dreams are haunted by those dreadful words; they seem written on the stars of heaven, and on each day as it passes. The sentence is acknowledged to be just. A consciousness of being the cause of Christ’s death adds to the guilt. In the horror and darkness of self-condemnation, faith catches a glimpse of the cross; and by a light of its own, the mystery is explained. It offers a new relation, which is embraced. The burden is removed; the darkness all gone, condemnation gone, and sunshine and gladness entirely fill the soul.” There is law and gospel for you.

Let me repeat, the Law of God is a terrible power! “*The law worketh wrath!*” saith the apostle. It has not only a fiery splendor which alarms the conscience, but fiery *serpents*, so to speak, which come hissing out of it; and when they sting the conscience, *faith* in an exalted Saviour can alone secure and apply

the remedy: for neither man nor angel is able to comfort. Marvel not, if these *young converts* are thus; seeing that experienced Christians found it hard to avoid them. The Law renders the Gospel precious, and teaches us to prize Jesus. These wounded ones, I have been thinking, know something about "*looking unto Jesus*;" though I sadly fear that Christ was not sufficiently lifted up before the eye of their faith. Oh! how much we preachers need the atonement and intercessions of Christ to save us from wrath, on account of the imperfection of our services! I am ashamed of myself when I consider how St. Paul preached Jesus, and how frequently he repeated His name!—not less than *nine* or *ten* times in as many verses, as I noticed to-day in 1 Cor. i. 1–10! He had his reasons for mentioning the name of Jesus Christ so often, in the beginning of his epistle to this young and ambitious church.

2. To-morrow night, let the text be Heb. xii. 2, and then your preacher is not likely to forget "*the name that is above every name!*" In the mean time let those concerned keep "*looking unto Jesus,*" as the text enjoins. Nor shall I neglect to do the same—not for myself only, that my own pensive heart may be cheered, but that he may undertake for all who have in any way suffered by my neglect. Nor can we fear that He who so readily healed the ear of Malchus, that suffered from a random slash of Peter's sword, will deny the boon to wounded spirits, who, may be, are yet suffering from a random stroke of truth, to which, it appears, they were not entitled. Good will come out of these inquiries and heart-searchings.

3. One present may assure himself I know the *bleating* of a lamb or a sheep, within or outside my Lord's fold; and it goes to my heart at once, and sends *me* to my room to *bleat*

also part of the night away, till grief and sleep hush me into silence; especially, if by some blunder, or unguarded sentence, eccentricity or infirmity or other, I was the cause of it. *Repentance* prevents *rebuks*, when it happens that from such cause grief has found its way into any heart, where my Lord only wishes to have gladness and joy. Let this suffice for the present.

4. One remark more, which I hope may be made here without offence: I know also the *gruntings* of other animals, whether within or without the fold, as well as I do the *bleatings* of a sheep or a lamb; swinish natures, though it may seem harsh to use the phrase, but they are easily known, who, to use the softest word, love their *husks* better than they do eternal life. I cannot deny some of these have cost me the loss of some needful sleep; nor can they, if the truth were known, that they have lost some sleep by me—rather by the power of my Lord and Master. One calls such low natures “Grunters against goodness;” and few places there are where such are not to be found; especially where the Gospel “*comes not in word only, but also in power*”! When hit, they grunt so loud sometimes, as to set all the little dogs and great dogs in the neighborhood a-wondering and a-barking! So the world goes! but adieu to *fretting*!

5. “A Doubter” will perceive I *understand* him, and he cannot well *misunderstand* me. It stumbles such an one to see “divisions in Israel’s camp,” and that it is evident there are some among us who cannot bear to look their own principles in the face. Be not surprised, my *friend*! Our doctrines are tremendous! If devils believe them and tremble, need you wonder that some among us tremble too? Or that some are

like those of whom Bernard complained of old, who sought for *straws* during and after the sermon, to put out their own eyes? Or that some who will not *mend*, are for having an *end* of such preaching? Or that such as love sin more than holiness, and what is called eloquence more than sinner-awaking truth, should prefer the old request, "*Prophecy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceit,*" and "*who say unto the seers, see not?*" (Is. xxx. 10.) The few verses which follow show their *motives*, and God's judgment concerning them. Some are like the Athenians of old, sir, of whom it was said, "They had *tender ears*, and loved *toothless truths*;" which made Demosthenes tell them plainly *they must get their ears healed*. Some among us must get their *consciencences* healed; then we shall have no difficulty with their ears, I fancy.

6. It is well for our friend to know a great fact: there are *fugitives* from their own *consciencences* among us, and from divine truth, and the justice of God;—just as he knows very well there are some wandering up and down the country, *fugitives* from civil justice, and dodging the police as best they can, and who are sometimes hard put to it in making good their escape! Austin of old detected hearers who had long been "*fugitives from their own hearts.*" Marvel not, then, that some are fugitives from the preaching of God's word, which has been ringing and flaming round the ballowed walls of this temple. I tell you, sir, some would run quite out of this world very soon, could they but find another world where there is neither hell nor preaching, and all to get rid of preaching.

7. There was a pinch in that discourse which gave offence, nor is it difficult to tell *where* it pinched. It is not every hearer that can say with an old disciple the other day, "I like

a sermon that has a *pinch* to it!" Carnal professors and easily awakened sinners rejected it;—and those, most, of course, whom it pinched most. It was not so much in the *manner* of it, as the *matter* of it. Many can bear the manner of a preacher, however rough and unpolished, if he is something of an original, and amusing. Herod heard John the Baptist gladly, and began to practice some things which suited his disposition. But when John pinched the conscience of his royal hearer regarding his besetting sin, off went his *head*.

8. *Hearers* I have had before now, which reminded me of children beginning to learn their *alphabet*, with dislike written on their faces!—A, B, C, etc., conveying no meaning; and evidently unable to perceive any connection between such dull and senseless sounds and the art of reading, all was irksome and uninteresting! *Repentance, Prayer, Faith*, etc., etc., in like manner, are irksome lessons to those whom we would set to learn the alphabet of experimental religion. They know not, or are unwilling to perceive the connection between these, and the future pleasure of reading their "title clear to mansions in the skies!"


9. An hour's amusement, or an hour's amazement, never enters into my plans with my hearers. No; but rather their immediate repentance and conversion. If they are "*amazed*" at this, it may save them from eternal amazement and horror; and my *predictions*, so often found fault with, may become *preventions*. People begin to profit, usually, when they *desire* to profit. Till then we must keep on preaching, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. I awoke out of a deep sleep the other morning, with these words of a devoted servant of Christ, now in heaven, occupying, and passing and

repassing over my mind: "*Faith* is the master-spring of a minister. *Hell* is before me, and thousands are shut up there in everlasting burnings. Jesus Christ stands forth to save men from rushing into the bottomless abyss. He sends me to proclaim his ability and his love. I want no *fourth idea*; every fourth idea is contemptible; every fourth idea is a grand impertinence!" There is safety for me nowhere else, and no longer than I tie myself irrevocably to these principles. Then let men or fiends assail, God will not suffer me to be greatly moved.

10. To day I was thinking of Numa, the philosophical and humane emperor of the Romans. The enemy was advancing upon his army, while he was in the act of "offering sacrifices to the gods." To one who informed him of his peril, he replied, "I am about the service of my God," which he considered a sufficient guarantee for his safety. The thought cheered me! "Let him fight who has a mind to it," said one of old. "I am not so mad as to fight against him that trusts to have God his defender and deliverer!" He was about to march an army to chastise a neighboring prince, a pious and good man. The spy returning, reported that when this prince was informed that war was intended against him, he quietly said he would commit the whole cause to God, and give himself to fasting and prayer. "Then," said the monarch, "let him fight who," etc. If certain persons have not taken leave of their senses, let them reconsider the matter, and be of the same mind with this sagacious monarch!

CHAPTER VIII.

HINTS FOR PROFESSORS.

HRISTIANS! are you aware, as you should be, that the eye of the world is upon you? *New converts!* are you awake to the same fact? St. Paul urges a “*cloud of witnesses,*” as a reason why we should “*lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us;*” or, as the old negro (who, if he tasted liquor at all, was sure to get drunk, and was overcome again and again) called it in his prayer, and with tears running down his cheeks, “the sin that doth so easily *upset* us!” Ay! and the world can easily detect us when we are upset by a temptation. Hearken to a reply designed for an ear you know not, but connected with an *eye* that has been upon some of you, to the injury of its possessor.

2. They tell an *old fable* in a certain country through which I once travelled, of *Inconstancy* desiring to have her likeness taken, but no artist would undertake it, because her features were so *changeable*. *Old Time*, however, at length consented to do it; but being at a loss for a suitable canvas, he selected the *face of Man*, upon which he drew the picture of *Inconstancy*; and so, said the fable, man, ever since, has been constant in nothing but *inconstancy!* It is sad that some professors of religion are too frequent in their illustrations of it.

But you cannot be ignorant, although not a Christian yourself, how many things there are to assail the stability of those who are trying to do well. The waves of the Atlantic are uncountable; but you might as well try to number them as to count the waves of temptation which buffet a Christian on the voyage of life. One who passed through much trial before he entered the heavenly port, said a Christian, like oil, should always be uppermost on the waters; distinct too, and unmixed with the world, and steadfast in the integrity of his character, midst all the agitations of a tumultuous world; and that Christians must constantly be holding a *counter-motion* to the course of the world, and the corruptions of the times! Worldlings, though they practise not this themselves, readily detect the cessation of it in professors. To provide for this, sir, God has ordained a "*life of faith on the Son of God,*" and continuing "*instant in prayer.*" Constant and instant, is the idea. Inattention to this may produce some of those *aberrations* you have noticed, and not wilful hypocrisy or self-deception.

3. An excellent divine in Scotland, I remember, made the following shrewd remark,—that there is just this difference between certain men of the world, and certain orders of sincere but imperfect members of churches: that *bad men* are worse, and good men are better than they appear; that the attainments of a believer are always beneath his aims; his desires loftier than his deeds; his wishes are holier than his works. Give other men their will, he contended, let them have full sway and swing for their passions, and they would be worse than they are; give that to the sincere believer, and he would be better than he is!

4. Not a word, however, against your *critique*, in the main.

Many such *borderers* there are, trimmers between the church and the world; somewhat like one who, in matters of faith and practice, tried to keep in with both Christians and Jews, yet was neither; reminding one of Sheridan's simile of the *blank page* between the Old and New Testament! They are a continuation of that careless race noticed by our Lord in his time, who heard his sayings, and did them not. He likened them to a man who built his house upon the sand. (Matt. vii. 26, 27.) In the catastrophe which befell that house, he would have us to apprehend their final calamity. It is well, however, you should remember, that in the *wise builder*, who built his house upon a rock, he indicates another class of professors; and a succession of such continue down to our times!

5. Those to whom you refer, are called in Scripture "*unstable souls*;" "*unstable as water*" was the patriarch Jacob's figure, adding that such "*never excel*;"—like water, that takes the shape of bucket, tub, or tumbler into which it may be emptied,—they take the form and spirit of any company into which they may be cast; but, as Milton remarks, "all are not of this stamp;" many there are "who faith prefer and piety to God." In the texture of their firmness, such resemble the adamant, which is more likely to break the vessel that would seek to conform it to its shape, than to be broken or moulded by it! If you have met with none such, you have been singularly unfortunate. Millions of such have passed through this world, since the days of Ezekiel, of whom God spake—"Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead against their foreheads; as an adamant, harder than flint, have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house." This fact may serve to

neutralize the effects of the examples upon which you animadvert. Antidotes to poisonous substances are a provision of Providence!

6. Not a word, then, against your *critique*, if confined to its proper limits. I believe with Aristotle that we may well suspect that man's profession whose *practice* contradicts it. Socrates would allow no distinction between *knowing* and *doing*. He would admit no difference between two certain Greek words—although any Greek scholar in our times would insist upon a difference—as one implies *wisdom alone*, and the other word *wisdom joined to action*. But the old philosopher insisted that a *do-nothing* wisdom was a *know-nothing* wisdom—next to no wisdom at all! But *to know* and *to do*—to *know good* and to *practise it*;—to *know evil* and to *avoid it*—the union of these two, he considered to be *wisdom*!

7. The *practical* is the most prominent feature of New Testament theology and character. A shrewd observer of man remarked that the difference between *divinity* and *science* is this; that it is not enough to *know*, we must *do it*! Look around you, my friend! Are there not some within your circle of observation who show proofs of godly fear? some who show you how a Christian ought to live in his daily walk and conversation? Who, in fact, are inscribing upon the minds with whom they are brought in contact from year to year, the truth of the religion of Jesus Christ, as well as the memorial of their own worth, legibly, to such, as the stars in the brow of heaven. But, as there are spots in the sky where no stars do appear, yours may be a mind upon which true Christians have had no opportunity to make such an impression. The loss is yours, if such be the case. Perhaps the truly good have been shy of

your company. If so, have they had no reasons for it? Nero complained that he never could find a faithful servant. He who recorded the complaint, remarked that it was no wonder: for those that were *good*, cared not to come about him; and those that were *bad*, he cared not to make better, as being desperately wicked himself!

Hume, the infidel, who observed to one, that he never yet found a Christian that was not *gloomy*, received a very proper reply—that if it were so, it was not to be wondered at, as a sight of him was enough to make any Christian gloomy! Reflect upon that! The best of God's people may have kept themselves out of your way; or, your *selections* for criticism, like those of Voltaire, have been unfortunate; or, your *companionship* have been with men of another order altogether;—common occurrences, any of these! There is a difference between the spirit of that man who is a friend at heart toward Christians, though not one himself, and the spirit of him who is at enmity with them, and on the lookout for faults to confirm him in his infidelity! I was told of a *skeptic* the other day, who, after his conversion, confessed that during thirteen years he had watched a certain plain, humble, praying woman, to find something in her character to confirm or strengthen him in his infidelity; but he watched in vain. At length he thought it high time to secure an interest in Christ. He did so, and confessed the course he had taken. That Christian woman little suspected how much depended upon her faithfulness!

8. How this revival is stirring-up skeptics! It was said of Jesus, when a child, that he was set for the fall and rising of many in Israel; and for a sign to be spoken against;—by

whom the thoughts of many should be revealed. We may say the same of this great work of God. It is well! This is the time for the Gospel to be looked at!—now that it is among us, as a fresh charter from heaven, which multitudes are now, disposed to consult as the charter of their salvation;—now, when it is opening many hearts, as Jesus himself opened the heart of Lydia under the preaching of Paul and Silas;—now that hearts hitherto shut against the truth, are flowing open under the penetrating word of Gospel power;—now that people are believing who never believed before; and tongues hitherto mute upon the subject, are day and night rehearsing the goodness of God;—so that were Chrysostom among us, he might say once more, they live well who lived evilly before; and obey now, who never obeyed before!—now is the time for skeptics to be astir!—the best time for them and for us!

9. It is well! The old adage, “They may laugh who win!” applies finely to Christians just now! Wind and tide are in their favor! Glad therefore certain clubs are alive and stirring, with eyes wide awake, nor turned askance, but looking straight before them, as Solomon advises; and a good hope we have that “*the eyes of their understanding*” may be opened also. We hail their presence as a good omen—can bear their bad manners with better heart and more patience now, than when religion was prostrate, and the Gospel, from some cause, powerless. We may reason with them, as did Paul with the unbelieving Jews, and in the presence of mighty and incontestable facts!


10. He who believes with one of the fathers of the Christian Church, that “the whole business of a minister in this life is to *heal the eye of the sinner’s heart, that God may be*

seen," will not think me out of the way of my calling, to meet on their own ground for the purpose; ay, and pay all possible attention to them. "*The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.*" But let all professors of religion beware, when such men get their eyes opened, that they by their inconsistencies and misconduct do not blind them again. God will require it of them, if they do.

11. *Opposition* I care nothing about. Better that than *indifference*. "Opposition is the evil angel that dogs the Gospel," said Calvin to the French king. An evil angel it is to some, and has often made the saints smart for it. But I have oftener had to complain that public indifference is an evil angel also, and, under some circumstances, the worst of the two. That is the reason I can bear opposition with fortitude or cheerfulness. When winning souls to Christ, I can "*laugh at the shaking of a spear,*" like Job's *leviathan*. God is converting many sinners, some of them notable sinners and skeptics; of whose conversion we may say as one did of a *bell*, it is not possible to turn it from side to side, without reporting its own motions! no, unless its tongue were tied. These have had their tongues unloosed, and they give glory to God, till the place rings again with their voices; and by them many are called and recalled to go to work in the vineyard. Like bells they do indeed report their own motions, when turned from Satan to "*the Lord's side,*" by the hand of Gospel power! Hallelujah!

CHAPTER IX.

METHOD WITH QUESTIONISTS.

HRISTIANS credulous? By no means! Christians think closely. They have the largest liberty to canvass every doctrine of Protestantism; indeed, every truth of Christianity! I believe with an old writer that all Christ's scholars are *questionists*, though not *question-sick*, like some of those who swarm around us at the present time; not *triflers*, like those in 1 Tim. vi. 4, who were "*doating about questions, and strife of words*;" or those *perverse* disputers—men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth—or those light and feathery souls, recorded in Ephes. iv. 14, "*tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine*." Those who belong to Jesus Christ are of a more substantial order, rooted and grounded in the truth, and built up in their most holy faith.

2. I have no objection to "questions," provided they are serious and important; otherwise you may receive a reply after the manner of the ancient philosopher, to one who asked him seriously, whether he did not think it a pleasing thing to see the sun?—"That is a blind man's question." There are some questionists who deserve a similar rebuke.

3. Nor am I fond of *curious* questions, more curious than

useful. It is of little consequence to us *where* hell is located, provided we can only persuade men to leave the *way that leads to it*; for that is more clearly laid down in the Scriptures than the location of that terrible place. When a man is sinning against God, he is going straight toward hell, no matter to what point of the compass his face may be turned! I hope, sir, you do not illustrate in your own character the shrewd remark of one now in eternity, that some have a much stronger desire to know *where* hell is, than to know any way of escape from going into it!

4. And there are *crochety* questions, the offspring of some whim, conceit, or fancy. A brain filled with these has little room for anything else. These, and such-like questions, deserve the fate of those books of the "*curious arts*," which made such a glorious bonfire in the market-place of Ephesus, in the days of the apostles!

5. A man may have many questions answered, and be none the better. Besides, the time employed in answering them, if turned to better questions, might result in eternal good to the inquirer. There is a difference between a man that leans against a *twig*, and him who leans against the *trunk of the tree*. A wit illustrated the folly of such *queries*, by the conduct of a simpleton tracing a *pinnacle*, where he might fall, when he might be more profitably employed in walking upon the solid ground! This mode of reply is hardly what you expected; yet, in "the long run," it may be more profitable to you, if thereby you are induced to inquire after better things.

6. But when it is evident Satan is imposing upon certain inquiring minds, offering them *stones* for bread, and serpents for fish, I endeavor to persuade them to cast away the grievous

imposition, by offering them the true provisions of the Gospel, provided for them by the Friend of sinners.

7. Regarding hell, wherever it may be located in eternity, be assured its torments are neither brief nor tolerable. Let those remarks of an eminent Scotch divine enter into your ears, and sink into your heart: that had wrath been either *tolerable* or *terminable*, the sword of *justice* had never been dyed with the blood nor sheathed in the body of her noblest Victim. And, if I believe there is a *need be* for the lightest cross that lies on a good man's lot, oh! how great the necessity for that upon which the Saviour died! He added, surely were God but for a moment to let us hear the wail and shrieking of the lost, that sound, more terrible than Egypt's cry, would startle the deepest sleeper, rouse the student at his books, arrest the foot of the dancer at the ball, and stop armies in the fury of the fight; striking terror into the boldest hearts, it would bend the most stubborn knee, and extort from all that one loud cry, "*Lord, save me! I perish!*" As to myself, sir, if I preach a hell for sinners after death, it is, 1st, because I believe it; and 2d, it is that my hell-exposed hearers may fly with me to heaven. If my sermons have dark *backgrounds*, so have some of the finest paintings; but let that pass. Had you listened to the wild scream of the mother bird the other day, you could not have doubted her affection for her young, in peril. Ah! sir, if my voice has more of the "wailings of the lost" than the tones of "manly eloquence," ascribe it to the view God has given me of the peril of sinners, and my strong affection for them.

8. The remaining "queries" are worthy of attention. Two observations allow me to make. There are two notions I have

never yet traced in the Scriptures, nor found allowed there : 1st. *Indifferēce* as to matters of faith, or opinion. 2d. *Freedom from responsibility* for religious opinions, whether true or false. If *true*, we are always held accountable *there*, for the good we might, if we would, accomplish by them ; if *false*, for the evil we may do by them. “ *To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin,*” is a New Testament axiom. *Truth* and *goodness* are represented in the Bible as being the fountain each of the other ; and so also error and wickedness ; as if the one could not exist without the other. The deduction of accountability is plain, and that we are *responsible* for our opinions ; consequently that there is no *fatality* about the reception of them, as if we could not believe otherwise if we would ; especially is it clear in Scripture that we are accountable for what we *might have known*, as well as for what we *did know* ! Therefore that sentiment of a distinguished orator and statesman receives no countenance from the Bible—that men are no more responsible for their opinions than they are for the height of their stature or the hue of their skin. Nay, nay, good orator ! although the poetry and sophistry of ages have been advocating this notion, it never can affect this great principle, that for such opinions as increase or lessen men’s stature in wickedness, or which darken or brighten the moral complexion of their nature, they are certainly responsible to God. There is nothing taught or assumed in the word of God contrary to this position. If these “ notions ” come in collision with those “ broad views of charity ” so prevalent in our times, be it so ; if the Bible gives no countenance to such a positive and destructive error, should I ? Nay, verily ! all the embellishments of orators,


poets, and latitudinarians to the contrary notwithstanding! Here I stand, God help me! Faithfulness to this principle reddened the earth with the blood of Christ's martyrs.

9. The *providence* of God, and His own word, join issue upon this point, against the *indifference* claimed, and our freedom from responsibility for our opinions, and their fruits; and with an earnestness and severity not to be mistaken. Who of us has never suffered from error of judgment? The late Mr. Dodd put this in a strong light thus: "Persuade yourself that *poison* has no noxious property, and see whether this will deprive it of its deadly character. Take a viper in your bosom under the conviction it is harmless, and see whether the conviction will extract or blunt its sting. Teach yourself to believe that *industry* is not necessary to success in life, and see whether this belief will shield you from the privations which follow in the train of indolence." To which add the persuasion that rum has no intoxicating and perilous quality, and see if it does not make you giddy, and set you reeling to and fro! There are *drunken opinions*, sir, as well as intoxicating liquors! and they cause men to make strange tracks on the highway of life, and as strange gyrations in morals!

Signals of warning are displayed everywhere throughout the Bible, nature, and providence, that the salvation of soul and body is tied to our opinions, and that there are opinions as injurious to the soul as poison to the body—as the viper's sting, as indolent habits to our temporal interests, as intoxicating liquors—ay! but as much more as the miseries of hell do surpass the sorrows of earth.

CHAPTER X.

DEALING WITH CRITICS.

RECISELY! That was my sentiment—that there are opinions which intoxicate the brain and befool the heart: “*drunken opinions*” was the phrase, and not so inappropriate either; for we have known them to set men a-reeling from one faith to another, and from error to error, and from heresy to heresy, like a drunken man, from wall to wall, and from ditch to ditch, on good terms with neither, until, falling into a still deeper ditch, out of which he never came alive, they staggered, poor souls! at length, into “*the bottomless pit.*” Why should you think it strange that with such “fiery zeal” we grappled with minds possessed of such opinions? Had such been in danger of drowning, or in peril of perishing in a burning building, would you have blamed our fiery zeal in trying to rescue them? Want of faith, or overmuch *fastidiousness*, makes a difficult hearer. It is no offence to me to be criticised. Every public speaker is subject to it, and should submit himself to it, amiably as possible. It is a right the great public claim, and it is commendable policy to concede the right with as good grace as possible, and—take our own way, after all, if we know it to be right, for that is our right also.

2. We owe, nevertheless, to that same public, to explain

respectfully why we differ; nor should we neglect the individual critic, perchance the representative of that public. For an instance, I have just now to call upon an ingenious critic to hearken, while I tell him I am not generally ambitious to say all that might be said upon a text, nor do I usually find it convenient to discuss every doctrine, duty, or theme which an acute hearer may notice there, and which he supposes "conscience should impel" the preacher to notice also. A single *principle* or *proposition* I have found frequently to be more effective than several, though the text seemed to invite to them. But I can return to the text. For this reason, among others, it is my custom to take the same text some half dozen times during a revival. Thus, that which has been left untouched in one discourse may be called into action and pressed home in another, and with marked effect. Neither do I think it profitable to try to cram every doctrine in the creed into every discourse, although I desire to *offer Christ* in every sermon. The doctrine which bears most directly upon the subject on hand, and which the text most plainly proves or illustrates, that is *the* doctrine for the hour. Now, there is nothing very uncommon in all this. Many other ministers pursue a similar course. After such an explanation, my critic may perceive, if a certain point was "eluded" when preaching from a certain text, it was not from the cause insinuated, but because other points, more applicable to my congregation, demanded my time and strength.

3. Besides, sir, do you not remember that Quintilian considered it a virtue in a *grammarian* to be ignorant of some things; or Pliny's hint, that it no less became an orator to hold his tongue, sometimes, than to speak? A *preacher* may

resemble the *painter* with whom Apelles found fault, that he never understood when he had *done enough*, and so spoiled all in *over-doing!* Nonnius' mark of a good *hunter* may do for the poor preacher, "that he can catch some beasts, though he take not all." By the way, those who hear me every night understand my plans better than those who only attend now and then. Lysippus, the famous carver, had the following printed in Greek over his *best pieces*, when exhibited to the public: "Lysippus hath something more to do at this work,"—a good method to arrest or disarm criticism. Well, sir, my hearers understand this of many of my texts and sermons, without my telling them. I believe, sir, with old Columella, that nothing can be *perfected* at first; it is only consummated by singular industry. Patience, then, my dear sir. The subject, like *life*, in death, may be all retouched again.

4. I am but a poor controversialist at best, grappling only with an error when it stands in my way, and not inclined to go far out of my way to hunt for it! I prostrate it, if I can, then fling it out of my way, and march on in the good old way of preaching the Gospel! Skeptics do not fancy these "*back-handed* blows," as they call them; but I find them useful and successful. They do make *gaps* sometimes in certain ranks. Have patience, then, the subject may be resumed. In the mean time take care that the gates of eternity do not open to receive you sooner than you are prepared to pass through them.

5. And now a few words for your two friends. 1st. "A *faultless* style in the pulpit" is a rare attainment. And what may surprise them, I am not anxious to acquire it. If in seeking to attain unto it, or in striving to maintain it, I should lose

sight of the main object in preaching, the salvation of sinners, and so miss winning a soul to Christ, the loss would far overbalance the advantages. Quintilian tells us of one whose greatest excellence was that he had *no fault*, and his greatest defect that he had *no excellence!* Those who are fond of that sort of pulpit style, are welcome to it. It is convenient, and pleasing, doubtless to such as have uneasy or troublesome consciences. When a minister is truly alive to God, and is seeking with all his might to arouse sinners to flee from the wrath to come, it is not easy to avoid "certain things," in expression and manner, which certain persons would pronounce a defect. *Versatility* of style seems to me inseparable from a passion for soul-saving, especially if accompanied by *genius*. An eminent divine of bygone centuries used to say, "*Ministers* should turn themselves into all shapes and fashions, both in spirit and speech, to gain souls to God!" A course that will ever be intolerable to the spirit of the world! 2d. As to "eloquence," I have long been of the opinion of one, that "whenever a man speaks or writes, he is supposed as a rational being to have some end in view; either to *inform*, or to *amuse*, or to *persuade*, or in some way to act upon his fellow creatures;" and that "he who speaks or writes in such a manner as to adapt all his words most effectually to that end, is the most eloquent man!" This idea used to give me a good deal of comfort and courage when a *stripling preacher*. It mattered but little with me what people thought of my elocution, if so be that *my point was carried*—in melting, and moving people to trust in Christ, to love him, and to glorify God; in awaking, and convincing hitherto sleepy and hardened sinners, so as to find myself surrounded by dozens, or scores of them, weeping and

crying for mercy; ay! and the place vocal with the thanksgivings of new converts and the hallelujahs of older Christians! Eloquence, or declamation, folks might call it what they pleased, for aught the preacher cared, just then! He had done his best, for that time, with a single intention and pure desire. The Gospel was the power of God, before many witnesses, and he was happy! I am much of the same mind still! Oh! for yet greater displays of the power of God!—but for thy glory only, my Lord Jesus Christ.

6. *Eloquence* is grace of speech. True eloquence is the offspring of the passions, and yet it is an *art*—the art of persuasion—the art of speaking well, and to the purpose, so as to secure the end desired. It is the art of pleasing, informing, convincing, moving, persuading. It can be employed in diffusing good, or spreading ill. The Greeks and Romans intimated this in their god Mercury, who was the god of eloquence, merchandise, and robbery! He was not only a god, in their estimation, but the messenger of the gods. “*Will a man rob God?*” Eloquence has often claimed to be his messenger, seeking *his* glory, yet all the while seeking its own! Alas for it! It is best to watch it narrowly! It may be in commission for selfish purposes, or for the general weal; for the glory of God and human welfare, or for self-glory and selfish interests, which one called “*a selfish villany*” if found in the pulpit, and at war with the spirit of the Gospel.

7. The celebrated Robert Hall, himself so famous for his pulpit eloquence, remarked, on a certain occasion, that he dispaired to see a consummate orator perfectly associated with a Christian teacher; that the ornaments of secular eloquence, profusely displayed, weaken the effects of the truths of the Gos-

pel; that those exquisite paintings, and nice touches of art, which belong to oratory, may excite the imagination without interfering at all with the awful functions of conscience, merely absorbing the admiration, and affording a feast to taste, without being the instrument of conviction; that such attempts at pulpit oratory decoy the preacher away from the peculiar doctrine of the Gospel, which would only give him a feeling of constraint, limiting the excursions of his imagination and confining him from his fine expatiations in the flowery field of declamation! Such was the opinion of a great master of eloquence, who for many years, and by experience and observation, had the best opportunity of forming a correct judgment of the matter.


8. A profusion of ornament, and an evident straining after more, at the risk, as Herbert observes, of

“Catching the sense at two removes,”

has been mistaken for eloquence by some superficial persons; even the greatest absurdities have carried the palm when so adorned. Common sense is, frequently, too homely an endowment for such a style, unless “decked up to the very taste of flesh and blood,” and beyond it, like the poor lady, who, in her hurry, so mismanaged her *rouge* as to mistake her nose, forehead, and ears for her cheeks! Or like the lady in her hoops, who tempted the simple-hearted waiting-maid to exclaim, “*Madam, is all that yourself?*” Common sense will hardly do for some, unless transformed into *uncommon sense*! If attended with uncommon usefulness, one might bid it “God speed,” but alas!—

CHAPTER XI.

PULPIT ELOQUENCE.

ELOQUENCE! My dear sir, people have little time as inclination to think of it, during preaching—the usual time to form an opinion! *Conscience* is too busy within them to allow it; at least this is the preacher's aim! Their *salvation* is more desired than their admiration. This fact can hardly escape the transitory hearer, who seldom leaves without feeling some stirrings of conscience; hence it is no uncommon thing to hear of offence having been taken, and dislike, and determination to "go there no more"—expressed in various ways. Could you see the letters he receives almost daily, you could better realize all this. The panorama of new faces presented nightly in our congregations tell a story, for they do not usually enlarge; but, had all continued to come who have showed themselves here the last four weeks, two or three chapels would have been insufficient, ere this, to have held them. There will be a reflux by and by, when they get over their huff, or when it is found conscience cannot be silenced. Amen!

I have been thinking lately of what is recorded of some of our Lord's hearers, who, after one of his discourses, exclaimed, "*This is a hard saying; who can hear it?*" And what next? "*Many from that time went back and walked no*

more with him." No longer acknowledged him either as the Messiah, or their teacher, and ceased to wait upon his ministry. A fear of losing hearers is a great temptation to unfaithfulness in the pulpit. Many a good revival has been prevented by a change in the style of a preacher, through fear of men. So greatly had our Lord's hearers diminished, in consequence of the discourse referred to, he mournfully inquired of his disciples, "*Will ye also go away?*" But did he soften the truth after that, or flinch from its faithful utterance? No. Among those of his hearers who remained was Judas, the traitor. The abyss was near over which he was so soon to plunge. *Truth* must utter a warning voice, whether it gave offence to others besides Judas, or not. "*Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?*" It is seldom a faithful ministry is long without some such causes of humiliation, and comfort. But when rightly viewed, he may enjoy much secret satisfaction in the thought of having the honor of being as his Master with regard to a diminished congregation, in consequence of a faithful declaration of the truth!

But to proceed: A friend of mine defined eloquence to be "a round and flowing style;" but much of what you have heard here lately, and which you have so kindly approbated, has been abrupt and impulsive; fragmentary, indeed, and angular as broken flints! which those who are fond of oratorical grace and beauty, to say nothing of their sins, are never likely to admire. At any rate, I find it good and convenient to take this into the account; and if the contrary occurs after presuming upon such a style, one is agreeably disappointed. This style, it cannot be denied, is usually wanting in smoothness, roundness, stateliness, softness, cadence, and—what not! There

is a style, soft, insinuating, and flowery, which frequently bears away the palm; descriptive, too, as a *picture gallery*, full of *figures* which appear before the eye of the mind as if they fed on roses, and were dressed to the verge of foppery! and when set off with the necessary accompaniments in the orator, which he is not likely to forget, in tones, looks, and gestures, is highly fascinating. *Rocks* are never thrown down by such elements! (Nahum i. 6.) Nor is it likely God often points to it, saying as of old, "*Is not my word like as a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.*" (Jer. xxiii. 29.)

I say nothing against a *pictorial style* of preaching, if natural, easy, appropriate, and not carried to excess, and the preacher has a *genius* for it. It is a species of painting. It is like putting his sentiments in dress; a method, so to speak, of giving a kind of visibility, color, and substance to his ideas. And if those sentiments or ideas are of themselves suitable to inform the judgment and assist the conscience, or to excite hope, or fear, or love, such illustrations greatly increase their power. I know a successful preacher who frequently adopts this style in the fervor of his appeals, and with considerable effect. Nothing against this style, if to all this be added "strength of sentiment, and weight of matter;" otherwise, he may be worthy of as much attention and patience as he who endeavors to render floating gossamer pictorial.

There is also a lofty, showy, diffusive style, sonorous in words and sentences, with a manifest straining after tinsel and brilliancy—which some consider eloquent. He who wins reputation and popularity by that, the great public will expect to maintain it. This has destroyed many.

Passion is the fountain of eloquence; and the warmer the

fountain the better, if the people are not to be convinced only, but melted and moved. Real eloquence is but the expression of the *heart's enthusiasm*; it is the language of the heart and its passions, and, in proportion to their warmth, it is apt to be vivid, broken, and impetuous.

“But here again the danger lies”

to reputation for a certain style of eloquence! “The *hottest springs* send forth their waters by *ebullitions*,” says an old Christian writer on prayer. The simile applies to the subject on hand. It suggests the idea of abruptness and irregularity of sentences, at least; not very friendly withal to that flowing elocution which won for an orator those graceful lines:

“Eloquence, obedient to his call,
Sailed down his flow of words with swan-like pride!”

No swans are ever seen among the rapids of Montmorency!

To return to the old writer's simile: The waters projected from *hot springs*, though they may be useful and have their medical qualities (like the style of pulpit speech we have been speaking of), yet they are never expected to discourse the eloquence of a Niagara, or to exhibit the flowing majesty of the Rhine or the Hudson.

To one capable of the higher flights of eloquence, but who adopts more generally a humbler style for the sake of *usefulness*, there may be some little sacrifice, perhaps; if of vanity and pride, the better it will be, unquestionably, both for himself and for his hearers. Ah! sir, *motive*, right, conscientious motive, renders all that sort of thing easy enough! Give me

a *warm heart*, burning with love and sympathy for poor hell-exposed sinners, and there is no difficulty in persuading oneself to adopt both *matter* and *manner* to effect the purposes of the heart. And when the results are visible—when “*the slain of the Lord*,” and the healed, and the saved are many, there is an income of joy, gladness, and satisfaction to the heart, which *eloquence* has never yet realized from mere popular applause!

That kind of preaching which usually wins the title of eloquence is, somehow, singularly unsuccessful in the awakening and conversion of sinners. At the same time we are acquainted with plain men, whom nobody considers eloquent, and sinners are being constantly saved under their ministry. Why is this? Is it because the *orator*, by absorbing the admiration of the sinner, diminishes in the same proportion the power of *conscience* to exercise its functions? Or, that the themes upon which he expatiates are not suitable to stir the conscience, or plant conviction in the heart? Far be it from me to express lightly of good *elocution*, which is simply a good delivery—the power to express one’s thoughts with elegance and beauty, and in a clear and convincing manner. And what is this, after all, but pure and simple eloquence! But, with regard to those “arts of rhetoric,” etc., etc., which your friends admire so much in certain of their great orators, they are unfit for this service. With all due respect, they would be as unsuitable to him who would bring down scores of hitherto hardened sinners to their knees to cry for mercy, as Saul’s armor was to David when he would encounter the giant of Gath! He preferred his sling, a few stones from the brook, and his simple faith and trust in the power of God! And so do we in the matter of preaching; *fragmentary, fre-*


quently, as pebbles, and sharp as the angles of flint, yet it does wonderful execution among sinners. Perhaps, as in the case of the stripling David, this style, more than that which is adorned by the graces of elocution, *necessitates* the faith which certainly does impart the overcoming power!

All these things, my excellent friend, have been pondered long, and well, years ago. Eloquence! according to the standard of some? Ah, no! no pretensions to aught else than plain honesty of thought, purpose, and expression. Nothing more! Cold enough, indeed, at times, and vehement. Whatever *name* the style may go by, for I have none for it myself—although vexed hearers and troubled sinners have given it names enough, some of which have not been very flattering to personal vanity, I assure you—yet, I cannot deny, that like the rod of Moses on the rock at Horeb, it has drawn water wherever it has touched! has opened the flood-gates of sacred sympathy—sympathy with scenes on Calvary; with revival scenes; despairing sinners, how they found their way into the bleeding arms of a dear Redeemer!—the tempted believer, how he gained the victory over the tempter, while he held up the blood of the Lamb as a shield, and used the sword of the Spirit in the fight!—sympathy with death-bed scenes, with faith triumphant even under the overshadowing wings of death; sympathy with the dying sinner passing the dark and mortal vale, the horrifying night of death closing fearfully around him, and death himself pressing so heavily upon his senses as to prevent the message of salvation from penetrating to his departing spirit; sympathy with scenes of unbelief and despair—with souls perishing in hell; or borne on angels' wings upward through opening gates into an eternal

Paradise! Ay! so have we seen this sympathy increasing before us every moment, till one general outcry told us of approaching victory! till hearts of stone melted and flowed as fountains of penitential sorrow; and better yet, oh! wondrous change! flowed on in streams of love to God and man, sparkling with joy and gladness, and full of the light and sunshine of heaven! With such scenes as these attending the word preached, I give care to the winds as to what spectators may think about the preacher's style or manner. This is all I have to say at present.

CHAPTER XII.

THOUGHTS ON PULPIT STYLE, CONTINUED.

NQUIRIES, such as yours, are never offensive. They are always interesting, because the subjects of them so nearly concern our Redeemer's kingdom, especially with regard to the good which our young friend may yet accomplish for Him, and the importance of right views upon the subject of preaching. I am greatly pressed for time. When the matter of "pulpit style" has had a thought, it has called forth, I confess, such a feeling of oppressive humiliation, that the subject has been gratefully dropped; grateful to my gracious Lord and Master, for his great condescension in accepting and blessing such poor and defective efforts to the salvation of sinners; and taking the liberty, though feeling very unworthy to do so, of cheering my heart by a consideration of that sweet apology of St. Paul: "*And my speech, and my preaching, was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*" In the latter clause of this confession, or apology, he gives us his motives for so doing. If you will consult the first verse of the chapter (1 Cor. ii. 1), you will learn yet more; that when he visited the city of Corinth, the idea that an *eloquent preacher* had come among them was the

furthest from his thoughts; or that he had any intention of using those arts of rhetoric which might win him that title; or, indeed, that he had been led, during his stay among them, to fancy at any time that the people thought him eloquent. "*And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.*" Blessed man! "*Determined not to know anything among*" them "*save Jesus Christ and him crucified.*" Whatever other temptation he had, it seems he had none to spiritual pride on account of his oratory, or from the people extolling him on that account, or because of their withholding the honor which he considered due to his oratorical powers. Oh! for more of Paul's spirit, exemplified in the preachers of the present day! How ought it to fill one with shame, to be conscious of a different spirit! That alone should be enough to make one tremble before God, whether in or out of the pulpit.

Every preacher, I suppose, forms some opinion regarding his own style or manner of enforcing truth from the pulpit. If it happen that he stumbles upon the idea that he is eloquent, when his hearers have formed a very different opinion, it may become a source of considerable unhappiness and disorder of temper. This I can say, sir: if I have never thought highly of my own elocution, I have of that of others. There is a true and *sanctified eloquence*, as there is that which is falsely so called. How often, like bees on roses, have I, with others, hung upon the lips of eloquence, saying in our hearts—

"Blest Jesus, what delicious fare!
 How sweet thine entertainments are!
 Never did angels taste above
 Redeeming grace and dying love!"

There are *eloquent souls* in this world, who, though unblest with a high order of eloquence themselves, have *genius* for it; such are the first to discover in a speaker "this breeze of nature stirring in the soul!" for the breeze reaches them soon as it begins to stir, and soon they are all alive with emotion and eloquence within! Do you understand me? If we had more of these in our congregation, there would be finer and more frequent outbursts of this sort of eloquence. A dull-spirited and frigid audience are seldom favored with it; they possess an atmosphere of frigidity, which chills it, or kills it, or drives it out of the pulpit. Their *looks* are enough!

It is not often I have an opportunity of hearing some of my gifted brethren; but the privilege is sometimes allowed me. Oh! but I do love to sit and listen when "the breeze of nature" and of grace is stirring in the God-sent messenger! when the intellect, "large-thoughted, and up to the mark of the fearless and clear truth," and scattering around it its rich thoughts, as the tree its fruit by the breezes of autumn!—rejoicing one's heart to perceive that Israel has yet her "*people-leaders*," as the Athenians termed their *great orators*; princes of the human intellect, as Edward Irving called them; lights of the world, walking in the high places of the understanding; the commanding spirits of the times, clothed with intelligence, as with a garment—bestirring themselves like angels, and like arch-angels strong—

"Who shed great thoughts

As easily as an oak looseneth its golden leaves

In a kindly largess to the soil it grew on—

Whose rich, dark ivy thoughts, sunn'd o'er with love,

Flourish around the deathless stem of their manes—

Whose names are ever on the world's tongue,
Like sounds upon the falling force—
Whose words, if winged, are with angels' wings—
Who play upon the heart, as on a harp—
Whose hearts have a look southward, and are open
To the whole noon of nature ! ”

That quaint proverb of the ancients, a friend of mine sometimes applies to preaching: “Many things go to the making of all things.” It is so in nature, and also in art, and why should it not be so in preaching? In a *soul-saving style* it is always so; *that*, like Nature, always seems to abhor a sameness, and prefers variety! I am partial to that style of which one speaks so charmingly, call it by what name you please, which, he says, “possesses some peculiar charm, which fascinates the soul into forgetfulness of either languors or labors, and which sweetly prevents their minds straying away out of doors in sighing weariness to the fighting world or storms of life without.” Ay! and fonder of it still, if there be that in it to lead poor sinners captive at its will, and bring them all broken and weeping to the Friend of sinners! I believe also with Mr. Jay, that “all eloquence in the pulpit, which does not arise from *feeling*, and produce it, is as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal!” and I am of the same opinion as Seneca, though I will not despise an *elegant* physician, yet will I not think myself much happier for his adding *eloquence* to his healing art!

But I must hasten, as other duties call. “A polished style of speech is pleasing and attractive, of course, as it shows the beauties and capabilities of our language. I like to hear it, if it seem natural and easy, and free from constraint and stiffness

—simplicity is the word; and when *immediate effect* has not been polished out of it. If the awakening and conversion of sinners, or a baptism of fire upon the souls of listening believers, attend it, success to it! But if these are sacrificed to it, as is too frequently the case, God forbid I should say so, if success is to mean it shall become popular, so as to be adopted by our *young preachers!*

A style may be polished until cold to iciness, and too bright withal for the radiation of Gospel heat: you know my meaning! Have you never noticed that the darker and rougher the sides and bed of a fire-place are, the more heat is radiated through the room; and the more bright, polished, and lustrous such places are, the less heat is thrown out around? This is a fireside fact, and in accordance with a law of nature with which you may have formed some acquaintance, and which we cannot very well alter. May it not illustrate a *pulpit fact*, also, that a rough and out-of-the-way style, other things being equal, will radiate more Gospel heat and life through a congregation, than a highly polished and finished style of utterance? This holds good in nine cases out of ten, account for it as you may. Perhaps the consciousness of the fact of the unpolished character of the address of the former may lead him to greater earnestness to have the heavenly fire superadded; while the latter may be tempted to rely more upon his polished style for effect, than upon supernatural influence. Those who are so happy as to combine both in their pulpit ministrations, are usually the most successful preachers.

The Rev. Rowland Hill used to say of some sermons he heard, "They remind me of a hailstorm upon pantiles; they make a deal of noise, but produce no impression." On an-

other occasion he said, "I don't like those mighty fine preachers, who so beautifully round off all their sentences that they are sure to roll off the sinner's conscience!" He added, that the *out-of-the-way* style of preaching was the best sort of preaching, for catching those who are out of the way. Dean Miller once was heard to exclaim, "It is this *slap-dash* preaching, say what they will, that does all the good." The good sense of your friend cannot fail to appreciate these remarks.

And now a few hints for the judgment of your other friends. It is with some *preachers*, as with real *poets* :

"The native *bards* first plunged the deep,
Before the *artful* dared to leap!"

For my part I cannot keep a thought back till it freezes, or loses all courage before it leaves the heart; turning it round and round, arming it merely with caution, and "dressing it up, as if to sell," as the Spaniard remarked. No! but out with it, full of heart, courage, fire, and jagged as a farmer's harrow! "Rough and ready" is a good motto for some occasions. The lesson which Campbell, the poet, received from Lord Jeffrey, I have no vanity in saying, was rendered useful to me, with regard to pulpit style. The great critic observed: "I have another fault to charge you with in private, for which I am more angry than all the rest: your timidity, or fastidiousness, or some other knavish quality, will not let you give your conceptions glowing, and bold, and powerful, as they present themselves; but you must chasten, refine, and soften them, forsooth, till half their nature and grandeur is chiselled away from them." Ay! mark that! was my reflection. Shall I go on chastening, refining, and softening my thoughts and sen-

tences, until they are capable of making as much impression upon the mind and conscience of my hearer, as a lump of putty flung against a marble statue! Nay! rather, henceforth, let me be another "electric rod," as the poet hints:

"A lure for lightning feelings; and his words
Felt like things that fall in thunder!"

In the mean time, how necessary for such an one to walk with God; to delight in God; to enjoy private, personal religion, and purity of motive, and an entire devotion to His will! to be able to say always, and to constantly appeal unto the Lord of hosts, even Jesus Christ, in secret, for the truth and reality of it:

"Thou my all!

My theme! my inspiration! and my crown!
My strength in age! my rise in low estate!
My soul's ambition, pleasure, wealth! my world!
My light in darkness! and my life in death!
My boast through time! bliss through eternity!
My sacrifice! my God!—what things are these!"

Then, whether the word be clothed with terror or winged with love; whether like the clouds, the lightning, the thunder, and falling rain-drops of the predicted storm that warned Noah and his family into the ark, and signalized the vengeance that swept a careless world away; or mild and gentle as the tones, and sweet allurements which won back again into the ark the dove of the deluge; or comforting and assuring as the bow of promise to the terror-stricken and desolate; or sweet and soft as the tones of Jesus to the weary and heavy laden, "*Come unto me, and I will give you rest*"—Jesus Christ in all things is glorified, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

CHAPTER XIII.

DEFENDS HIS METHOD OF PREACHING.



THE *stranger* believes he could preach without disturbing anybody, if he could make up his mind, to use a figure of Dr. Adam Clarke, to be "harmless as a chicken, and fruitless as an oyster!" This he cannot do; so he and others must bear the consequences, I suppose. The state of the people he knows, and the truth most suitable to them; better, certainly, than certain "critics of good preaching," who come and go at their convenience, and have little opportunity of knowing their spiritual wants, and as little disposition to inquire. He converses with hundreds, of them every week regarding their religious state. It is plain, therefore, he is a better judge of the treatment which they require.

Some are *sin-sick* and in deep distress, and need medicines, such as some of my critics, I fear, know not how to prescribe or apply. *Sin* and an angry conscience have inflamed others, and such are sadly predisposed to a high degree of irritation, and nothing pleases them: even "halfway truths go but halfway down, and hard at that," as one has remarked; so that they find it of little use to go elsewhere. "Something warm is better than lukewarm," they think, but the stranger's "extreme measures" are intolerable. Nevertheless, *he* thinks the *old doctor's* motto may not be amiss, even in pulpit practice: "Mild diseases require mild

medicines, and violent diseases violent remedies." What, doctor, *kill* or *cure* remedies? "Oh no! not that; but a strong disorder needs a strong remedy to cope with it, and, when it evidently seeks to kill our patient, we must seek to kill it. If it beats the remedy, the patient dies—that's all." Ay, but if the battle between the two destroy the patient, doctor? "And what of that? We cannot stand by and see a man die, when we honestly believe we have the medicine that will cure him." We preachers have the advantage over you physicians, doctor. "In what?" Oh! only in this, that if we can only persuade our *spiritual patients* to take the remedies we are authorized to prescribe, they infallibly cure.

Now that the matter is before us, you may as well take a larger view of our responsibility. There are *souls* in our midst who are entirely in that state which the Lord God has so fearfully and graphically described in the first chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, where he declares that "*the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores.*" Such is the state of many a poor sinner's soul in our midst. And some of them, alas! by their own confession, are "*past feeling.*" We know the truth, however, that is likely to make them *feel*; but I assure you, my friends, it requires courage here to apply it as faithfully and plentifully as these awful cases demand. *Salt* will make a wound smart. Certain truths are like salt; and they need not only to be sprinkled upon the corrupt sinner, but rubbed into his wounds. Satan has prepared such to be a *burnt offering* in hell. He only waits permission to carry them off, which has not yet been given; because—and blessed be God for the

grace!—it has not been said of these, as of the house of Eli, “*The iniquity shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering nor ever.*” But, as it is written, “*Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,*” that is, *Jesus*. All are commanded to present their bodies and souls as “*living sacrifice to God, holy and acceptable.*” These are neither holy nor acceptable, but we are not without hope they may be. If “*a holy priesthood,*” are we not called “*to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God, by Jesus Christ?*” We would offer these poor sinners to God, in the name of the great “*sin offering*” once offered.

Ay, but repentance and faith in Christ are demanded in the Gospel, without which the offer of them to God will meet with a sure rejection. They must be made to *see* and to *feel* their wretched condition. No timid application of truth is likely to effect this; no, nor every, or any sort of truth. I was struck the other day with that command of God in Lev. i. 13: “*And every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.*” Ay! I thought, *truth* is the salt with which, in our dispensation, these sinners must be sprinkled, ere we presume to offer them for acceptance upon God’s altar, even Jesus Christ. And knowing well the quality of the salt required, I commenced the work of sprinkling that corruption with it; ay, and to rub it in, until the preacher sweat again. It is this, be it known unto you, that has caused most of all the trouble—“*this muss,*” as some are pleased to call it!

And here let me tell you that it is to a deficiency of this *salt*, or the want of a courageous and laborious application of

it to the diseased souls of sinners, we may trace the superficial character of some revivals, and their transitory effects. Too frequently the wounds made by sin have been closed prematurely, without having been properly laid open again by "*the sword of the Spirit.*" Those "wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores" have been closed, and bound up too soon. The *oil* has been applied before the salt, or without. Unless such sores are thoroughly opened in the work of true repentance, and penetrated to the lowest depths by this salt—the living, searching, penetrating truth of God—they will fester and become bad again, or worse than ever. May God help us to apply the salt faithfully and unsparingly,

"Let men exclaim, or fiends repine!"

My figures may not be altogether agreeable to some persons of refinement and taste; I cannot help it; they are scriptural, and I am not ashamed of them, no more than I am of the Gospel of Christ, which offers a remedy for every wound that sin has made.

A caution just here. Do not be alarmed for the "*babes in Christ.*" A little *salt of truth* will do them no harm; better get used to it in the beginning; it will make them healthy and vigorous, and less susceptible of evil influences. It is hinted in Ezek. xvi. 4, that *new-born children* were rubbed with salt, which made them, doubtless, renew the cry with which they came into the world; nevertheless, it was doubtless designed the better to prepare them for their new mode of existence. We must salt these babes in Christ, though we have a cry for it—even at the risk of some friends supposing them quite spoiled of all good, and all but driven out of their senses. They will

make all the better Christians by-and-by. It is for the want of this timely and plentiful application of the salt of truth that so many grow up to be so puny and delicate that they are good for nothing in the church, and cannot bear pulpit faithfulness.

Besides, many are not only "in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity," but are *bitter* against Christians. They resemble the fountains of Jericho, which required sweetening; but nobody knew how to go about it till the prophet Elisha came along. All complained that the waters were not fit to drink. The prophet required a new vessel, just as the stranger among you needed a new sermon, and a new method of application for the occasion! The prophet put *salt* in the new vessel, went to the springs, and cast into them the *salt*; when, I suppose, many were ready to exclaim, "The water is brackish and bitter enough already, without adding salt to it; why apply a remedy so contrary to the effect which we desire to have produced?" Possibly we may imagine Elisha's reply: "That the finger of God may be seen! Nothing short of the miraculous power of God can heal these waters; and if they are healed by casting into them this salt, the miracle will be the more evident to every one." So in went the *salt*, and a declaration came forth from heaven: "*Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters;*" and the historian bore record, "*So the waters were healed unto this day.*" (2 Kings ii. 19, 20.) We must not be sparing of the salt in question, although at first it may seem to increase the opposition of sinners.

Jesus says of us, "*Ye are the salt of the earth; not the honey of the earth!*" What a relief had he said so, and given

us instruction how to become so! How much persecution it had saved us! for such *honed* lips would have received many *kisses* from the world! *Kisses* instead of hisses, praise instead of blows, and smiles in the place of frowns! Agreeable exchange! Ay, but our old corrupt *world* needs the *salt* to keep it from putrefying! And as for the salt itself, neither hisses, blows, nor frowns can affect its *qualities*, though I would not vouch as much for the *kisses*! Salt may waste itself in melting, as well as sugar. Both the church and the world have wounds to be healed, and there is much "*proud flesh*" to be reduced and removed. But the salt that makes it smart may bring smarting to the salter!

Again our Lord says, "*Ye are the light of the world*"—not the *darkness* of the world! Had it been so, the followers of Jesus had escaped many a blow and much sorrow. He hinted as much when he said, "He that doeth evil hateth the light"—ay! and the *light-givers* also!

That was a shrewd remark of one, "Some men live by their sins as the mechanic by his trade." It is a rule with such to *hate* the light; but policy may restrain or dictate an ingenious method of venting the hatred, without exposing the cause, or that even such hatred exists. I have noticed this, and marvelled at the simplicity of some in allowing such credit for what they did not possess. It sometimes, however, takes the form of open skepticism. If lacking in brains or information, such become very irritable and offensive when closely pressed. It requires much genius to defend themselves from the simple but convincing evidences of Christianity, and the strokes of conscience as well. The state of both is pitiable.

A good conscience needs no alliance with *bad principles*. A holy life needs no such *backers*. A garland of thistles is a poor exchange for a wreath of flowers. *Guilt* and uneasiness are inseparable, and in the end wretchedness and anguish; not so much from the actions of others as from its own reflections. *Sin* provides for its own *punishment*, which always proceeds from the sinner himself. There is no point of truth more clearly supported by Scripture than this. He spoke feelingly and truly who said there is no possibility of reasoning ourselves out of our own experience, or of laughing down a principle woven so closely into the make and frame of our natures. "Reason and conscience," he added, "put forth their dictates concerning virtue and vice, and they are plain and perfectly intelligible; and no one can do violence to them without incurring discomposing and afflicting thoughts; just as a *wound* will raise a smart in the flesh that receives it. Repentance and pardon, through faith in Christ, heal the wound; and when once healed, such thoughts and reflections *pass away*."

Let the awakened sinner know that it is only that which satisfied *eternal justice* on Calvary, can satisfy that awakened conscience in his breast! The law of God could not be appeased until it had nailed the Lawgiver to the tree; nor can the law-breaker's conscience be pacified until faith unites it to the great atonement for the sins of the world. Rest assured of this, O thou troubled sinner! Herb, nor fruit, nor leaf was found in all the garden of Eden that could heal the wound made by sin in the conscience of Adam. Nor does there grow in all the gardens of morality, nor upon all the commons of infidelity, any remedy for a wounded

conscience. That, O awakened man! which healed mine, was found growing near the cross, and yet so near the hand of faith that it could be reached. It was my sovereign remedy, and effected a complete cure. Glory be to God! Amen.

CHAPTER XIV.

A BOW TO THE CRITICS.



IGN-REQUIRERS and *wisdom-seekers* were St. Paul's annoyers. "*For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom;*"—yet, he went on preaching "Christ crucified," though a stumbling-block to one class, and foolishness to the other. So he tells us. Immediately follow those very strong and startling expressions, "*Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men*"—in defence of the *wisdom* of God, in employing means apparently so weak for the accomplishment of *effects* so mighty as were witnessed. The allusion is glanced at with modesty and deference, yet not altogether without cause. The *stranger* is happy in being allowed of God to "*preach Christ crucified*" also, though not without weakness and various imperfections. The *effects* must speak for themselves. The wisdom of this world, which glories in its instrumentalities, would have chosen differently, doubtless. But God has said, "*My glory will not I give to another.*" Twice does he say so by the same prophet. He will give us almost anything else, rather than his glory—his love, his beauty, his holiness, his eternity—will even share his *heaven* with us; but he will not part with his GLORY. God secures his own glory in choosing "weak things" to confound

the mighty; and "things which are despised, *and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are.*" Another reason for this choice, is plainly declared in the following verse, "*That no flesh should glory in his presence.*" (1 Cor. i. 27, 28.) These are comforting facts to the weak and humble.

But to the point. The lesson was profitable. My ambition, however, runs not in that direction; at least not so high, and for widely different purposes. This, when I explain, may throw light upon those pauses, when, instead of advancing upon the summits of successive climaxes, "where eloquence might afford to thunder among the Alps of thought," the intellect expends its strength in the vale, "among the humblest themes." When addressing my fellow-men upon the concerns of the soul, I desire three things: *First*, to speak so as to be perfectly understood by every one. *Second*, to make the people *feel* that which they understand; and *thirdly*, to *persuade* them to embrace heartily that which they know and feel to be truth, with regard to their duty to God, to themselves, and to one another. I have no time for other work, much less for climbing away up there; lest my God should put it to me as he did to *Elijah* on Horeb, "*What doest thou here, Elijah?*" Having less excuse than the prophet, I might not come off so well!

My apology to another is this—for I always wish to stand well with my hearers, if possible: Had I "*written and read*" my discourses, since my arrival in the country, my credit for correctness and elegance might, perhaps, have approached nearer to your standard of excellence. But if at the loss of *effectiveness*, the church of God would not have been much the

gamer; besides loss of credit with the *angels*, by depriving them of a portion of their usual joy over repenting sinners, which I would not like to do. (Luke xv. 10.) A moment or two since, I used that safe little word, "*perhaps*," and for a reason. My temperament, which is ardent, would, most likely, have hurried my thoughts and language off the track and over those paper fences—like those sheep the other day, which at a bound possessed themselves of a better pasturage than the fences indicated! or, like a whole herd of thirsty deer in the Western world, rushing across the wilderness like a whirlwind, attracted by the voice of many waters from the far away cataract to windward! When the wind blows from Calvary, the headlong soul which God has lodged within me rushes forth, with all its affections and powers, over all the hedges and ditches of rhetorical precision and propriety, to be *there*, where I have been many a time; where twenty sentences, spoken under the influences of the cross, have done more to bless and to save, than scores and hundreds of them, read or spoken far off from that great central point of power and salvation;—where, and oh! how often, have I stood in adoring wonder, beholding the effect of Jesus set forth and crucified for the sins of the world;—and how a view of that atoning death has brought life and salvation where all was death before;—and many a saved sinner's cheeks bathed in tears—vividly illustrating those sweet verses once more:

"I saw one hanging on the tree
 In agonies and blood,
 Who fix'd his languid eyes on me,
 As near his cross I stood.

“Sure never till my latest breath
 Will I forget that look ;
 He seem'd to charge me with his death,
 Though not a word he spoke.

“My conscience felt and own'd the guilt,
 And plunged me in despair ;
 I saw my sins his blood had spilt,
 And help'd to nail him there.

“Alas ! I knew not what I did,
 But now my tears are vain ;
 Where shall my trembling soul be hid ?
 For I the Lord have slain.

“A second look he gave, which said,
 I freely all forgive ;
 This blood is for thy ransom paid ;
 I die that thou may'st live.

“Thus, while his death my sin displays
 In all its blackest hue,
 (Such is the mystery of grace,)
 It seals my pardon too.

“With pleasing grief and mournful joy
 My spirit now is fill'd,
 That I should such a life destroy,
 Yet live by him I kill'd.”

Oh, but “*Christ crucified*” is a wonderful theme ! There is nothing like it for melting, moving, swaying, persuading, winning a congregation. Other things may move and melt a little ; but, for deep and permanent effect, nothing can equal

the scenes of Calvary—and so capable are they of being seen from almost innumerable positions, and under such a variety of lights! It is a pity, owing somewhat to a variety of matters which some suppose have a claim upon the pulpit, that these things should be preached so sparingly; surely, at least, on every sacramental occasion. And yet, on such occasions, I have listened to sermons from which could not be gathered, from first to last, a single intimation that the “*Last Supper*” was to be celebrated at the close—the white cloth covering “the communion service” and sacred memorials, being the only remembrancer. It is as if some were tempted to think that “*Christ crucified*” would, like other themes, “wear out,” and become insipid and ineffectual by frequent repetition. This cannot be; the nature of the subject entirely forbids it. Had such but stood beside the *stranger*, the other day, and witnessed the *effect* upon a weeping multitude, the unworthy thought would have been banished from the mind. Those unmistakable symptoms of penitential grief and despair which played over that panorama of upturned faces; the dawnings of hope coming out tremblingly upon those wet cheeks, while Christ was set forth crucified before their eyes, for their sins, even for theirs; and the sunshine of joy beaming amid their tears, as they believed;—oh! how all this proved how all-powerful are the doctrines of the Cross to awaken the most profound emotions of which the human heart is capable! I trust God will enable me to hold up the great atoning sacrifice oftener than ever before my congregations. Amen.

This is a digression, which my “critical friends” will excuse. But to return to subjects in question. *Preachers* differ in their style. It is well, as they have a great variety of

hearers, of whom, even in Christian countries, they may well say, with Paul, “*I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians ; both to the wise and to the unwise.*” We have our share, I reckon, in our congregations at — ; persons, too, who are well versed in the rules of *oratory*, and acute in detecting blemishes, and, to do them justice, *appreciative* of any beauties akin to the exalted art. I mean no offence ; but I have had my share of such hearers as the venerable Boston had to complain of, some of whom he compared to *sponges*, that suck up everything, good or indifferent, without profit ; some to *sand-glasses* or *hour-glasses*—what they receive in one ear goes out at the other ; and some hearers he likened to *strainers*, which let all the good pass, retaining only unpalatable substances and other dregs, which they exhibit, as opportunities serve, as proofs of their acuteness and usefulness ; others to *riddles* or *sieves*—*riddles*, which hold the chaff and fragments of straw only, letting all the noble grain pass through—*sieves*, which retain the husks, bran, and other coarse substances, while the *flour* escapes from them. If any of my present hearers can make the application, some good may come of it ; but a preacher who offers such hearers nothing in their way, should hardly be classed among us ordinary mortals.

* * * * * * *

“A candle is no star.”

1. Admitted : the difference between them is vast, indeed ! but not infinite—for a star has a limit both as to bulk and capacity of radiation, as well as a candle ! But if a *candle* be no star, neither can a star become a candle. Each is good in

its place ; and many think a candle is often more convenient and useful than a star ! We do not despise the humble candle, though it cannot appear so magnificent as a star ; for there are circumstances, frequently, when the humble candle is more available and necessary than the brightest star that circles round the sun !—more cheerful and useful, ay, and safer withal as a guide in dark and unsafe places, and a more reliable aid than a star in finding that which may have been lost or mislaid.

2. There are *stars* in the firmament of the church, such as are called great and magnificent preachers ; and there are *candles* also—plain, humble, useful preachers ; not so brilliant, indeed, nor so elevated and unapproachable as the stars ; but they may have what the stars have not—*heat* as well as *light* ! And if work—extra work—is to be done at late hours, and valuables in peril of being lost, or not available in the church's hour of need, those *candles* may accomplish what stars would never condescend to do ! Men have lost their lives, or gone fearfully and perilously astray, by following the stars—like him who, while gazing up at the stars, fell into the ditch ; while he who allowed himself to be guided by a plain candle, burning in a very humble lantern, passed safely on, though, maybe, he stopped long enough to help the star-gazer out of the ditch ! The day of judgment may declare that such humble and despised "*candles*" have saved more from falling into hell, and guided more souls to heaven, than the brightest "*stars*." Do you understand me ?

3. Besides, sir, some nights are *starless*, and a humble light, even in the form of a "*candle*" in an unpretending lantern, is not to be despised. The *lantern* may not be fashioned after the most approved model or fashionable pattern ; never-

theless, if it give sufficient light to show the right path, detect the slough or the peril, who but a fool or a thief would despise it! It may even emit a light all the more honest and faithful from its unseemly crevices! And so long as it hangs together, and a "candle" is able to burn within it, it is never likely to become a *dark lantern*, nor to acquire the art of a *magic lantern*, to give undue magnitude and coloring to things;—plain, honest, faithful, pretensionless, old-fashioned lantern!—like some preachers I know of—nor are they few in number—devoted, common-sense, ever-to-be-depended-upon servants of God and his church—*lights*, though little accounted of by the rich and the great, which have guided many wandering feet into "the path of life," and along it into glory and eternal life!

4. So much about the "lantern;" and now a few more sentences in behalf of "*the candle that is no star.*" The Psalmist says, "*Thou wilt light my candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.*" And so he did, doubtless, by which, as he soon after remarked, he was able to "*run through a troop, and leap over a wall!*" Who can say that this candle has not been lighted by the living God to show you your *peril?* to apprise you of a startling nearness to the brink of the pit that is bottomless, toward which you have been approaching in the dark? Think of that! For you may find it to have been fact when you reach eternity.

5. Solomon named *the spirit of man the candle of the Lord*—a candle which he himself lights up by his Spirit, by which he searches the souls of others, and by which conscience is assisted to do its office. Nor did Job despise the figure of a *candle*, when speaking of the Lord's dealings with him: "*When*

his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness." And does not God himself predict that he would "search Jerusalem," not with "stars," but with "candles" (Zeph. i. 12), in order that he might "*punish the men that are settled on their lees; that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil*"? Jesus compares the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and the manner in which he would have them exhibited, to a lighted candle in a *candlestick*, giving light unto all that are in the house (Mark v. 15). And is it not written of one of the plagues of spiritual Babylon, "*the light of a candle shall no more shine at all in thee*"? (Rev. xviii. 23.) You perceive, then, I have no reason to be ashamed of your figure—seeing it is one of honor, selected by the Lord himself, ages before you were born!

CHAPTER XV.

DEALING WITH UNEASY CONSCIENCES.



THE Bible! It is not only "a singular book," my "*uneasy friend*," but a wonderful book! Turn which way you will, whether in *criticising* or *sinning*, and you may well say, "It is sure to have a catch upon one!" Just so! And you are not the first discoverer of that fact, by millions. Well for you that you have made the discovery within the boundaries of time, where mistakes may be rectified. The laws,—"*decisions and influences*" (if you will)—of the Bible, like the universal law of *gravitation*, take hold on everything, act upon everything. There is no escaping. What must they be in eternity! The vindication there of these will be either terrible or glorious. In this life you may determine which it shall be in the life to come.

Indeed, sir, you can hardly accent a sentence or syllable on the subject of religion and morals, without being beholden to the Bible for part of it, or some word to help you out. It may show, also, how intimately all our religious impressions are interwoven with its language. And now, if I may refer again to the "*candle and the star*," in my remarks this forenoon, suffer the word of exhortation. Despise not the humble "*candle*," for it may have been lighted by the breath of heaven for this very purpose: either to search thy heart, or to guide thee

through the darkness. Happy for thee, if, like Abijah of old, there is found in thee "*some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel.*" Amen.

Upon one point I agree with you, and heartily detest the spirit of the thing, as much as you possibly can do; while I pity the man who allows himself, for the sake of a fat salary, and an easy, honorable position, to be so necessitated. It was so in the days of the devoted Baxter. "The minister that would stand as an adorned idol, that hurts nobody, touches no sores. Harmless as the notes of an organ, or a tinkling cymbal, that will tickle the fancy, and make divine worship a kind of religious stage-playing, that is the minister for some." Do you know of many or any of our preachers so circumstanced? If so, you will agree with me, they are of all men most *inexcusable*; such is the *absolute* nature of our *itineracy*, that in the short space of a couple of years or so they are sure to be removed, in accordance with discipline, into another field of labor. I would express a similar hope regarding the ministers of most other denominations in the land.

But how is it that, while you cannot behold such a character without adding to your "doubts regarding the truth of religion itself," you are so dissatisfied with a humble preacher who takes exactly the opposite course?—who, instead of tickling the fancy with straws, attacks the conscience, and strikes both hard and true, to the laying open of *old sores*, which ought to have been healed and well years ago, if the proper remedies had been applied? But the rub may be there; for your *own* old sores may have been laid open also. How is it? By the way, perceive you not your own inconsistency? A young man remarked to his companion on retiring from hearing a heartless and care-

less preacher: "If that man believes religion to be a reality, is not his spirit and manner disgusting?" Doubtless you would have agreed with him. But, now that religion is set forth as a glorious and yet terrible reality, the enthusiasm of the preacher would lead you to doubt. Allow me to commend you to the work of *self-examination*.

The "*inference*" is common among those who have taken a pique against Christians; and so fallacious is it, that I wonder a person of your understanding should once name it—that all "the brotherhood" deserve to lose the confidence of a community, because two or three have suffered righteously that calamity. As much as to say, because a brace of rogues have been detected at Yorkville, the entire population should fall under suspicion. If you are contented to drop your inference, so am I. And why suppose that Christians stand as much in dread of hell as most of their unprofessing neighbors? Suppose they do, and are trying faithfully to live so as to keep out of it, are they to be despised for that? *Sincerity* is pretty evident, is it not? They are commanded in Scripture to fear Him who has power to cast into hell.

Allow me to commend to your consideration that question proposed many years ago by the pious Pascal: "Which, I pray you, has most cause to be *afraid of hell*—one that is under ignorance whether there be a hell or not, or another who is certainly persuaded there is a hell, but is encouraged to hope that he shall be delivered from having his part in it?" What reply is rife through this audience? I need not declare what your countenances so evidently proclaim. What thinkest thou? Come, dear sir, let me persuade you to "*make your own calling and election sure!*" It is written, "*Every man shall bear*

his own burden." Cease, then, to load innocent men with other people's sins. "*Judge not, that ye be not judged,*" is a caution our Lord thought proper to inculcate. It contains a hint sufficient to make the uncharitable heart tremble.

Another will please give ear. All you have said only shows that there are *promises* in the Bible, as well as *threatenings*, and that you prefer the former to the latter. And who would not? Nor would I deprive you of any comfort therefrom, if you do really believe in your conscience that they apply to yourself, that you are just such a character as a holy and righteous God would lavish such promises upon. But if you have reason, rather, to suspect that his *threatenings* have a fitter application, then you are but befooling your own soul by "catching" at things which do not belong to you, and never can, unless you become a repenting and believing sinner. Remember, I am not charging you with guilt, but merely offering you a few friendly hints, which may be of eternal advantage.

CHAPTER XVI.

RUNNING FIRE.



VERY true, sir. It is possible, as one observed, to choose “a merry way to misery,” by which he meant an easy way to hell—an inexpensive way to perdition; easy on the purse, but hard on the *conscience*; sometimes hard on both. It never has seemed to me either sound policy or good economy to allow the fear of man to stifle the fear of God; or “to part with a good conscience to save the feelings, the flesh, or the purse; to leap, as it were, into hell, to avoid the foul breath of the scorner.” A very foolish and expensive line of business, that! Burns could tell you

“An Atheist’s laugh’s a poor exchange
For Deity offended.”

Ay, or the laugh of any other thoughtless sinner. Ponder these things.

It is no secret, just now, and needs no prophet to declare the end of such men; that some are trying to drink away their religious convictions; some to laugh them away, and play them away, and sin them away; but if rooted fast in their conscience, they may not succeed in any way. It is said the birds of Norway are of swifter wing than the birds of other nations which have longer seasons and number more hours in their day. Their seasons are short, and days short, all passing so

swiftly away that they know by instinct that swiftness of wing is a necessity in all their undertakings to provide for themselves and for their young. It is thus with the sinners of this land. Seasons of mercy, the day of grace, and opportunities to be saved, are headlong, and of short duration. Sinners seem aware of it, and, therefore, are swifter and more determined in the race of folly than those of other nations. One would think the contrary ought to be expected, and that the rapidity of their motions should be on the side of religion in every good word and work.

My religion and zeal they must consider frail affairs, if they were to be disturbed by those *squibs*. The smith needs a hand at the *bellows*, that his fire may burn with an *intenser flame*; and a dash of dirty water is a help, which another, less experienced, would consider a hindrance. These blasts of contradictions only fan the flame of zeal. When God answered by fire on *Carmel*, the *twelve barrels* of water could not extinguish the flames that arose from an altar there. If this *fire* does not awaken repentings within them, nor convert, nor purify, they may become as *stubble* before it, and without ability to "*deliver themselves from the power of the flames.*" (Isa. xlvii. 14.) Oh! that it may be otherwise! By the way, have you forgotten that one of the sacred writers was made "*the song of the drunkard*"? What Satan cannot frown down, nor fling down, he tries to *sing* down. Let them sing. Our "*songs of Zion*" have *twenty* hearers to their *one*.

Again, know you not that it is written, "*The Lord is not slack*"? No, neither as regards the fulfilment of His *promises* nor in the execution of his *threatenings*. That he is "*long-suffering*" is plainly admitted in the same scripture. How *foul*

to call that *slackness*, which denotes an effect of *mercy* upon the motions of *justice*! In the passage alluded to, the true cause is given: “*Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*” (2 Peter iii. 9.) A singular intimation, that, if none eternally perish, or cannot, by any possibility!

It is best for all of us that justice moves at a leaden pace, as if its feet were *lead*, while *mercy* flies on wings to save. But for this, such is the natural tardiness and enmity of man, none could be saved. “*Mercy, triumphing over justice, is a tree of life to a world of sinners.*” But it is a sad sight to see men plucking *death* from this tree of life. Ay, and descending into hell by its roots, rather than ascend into heaven by its top. Going down to Hell by the same means that saints ascend into heaven. Making the plea of Christ’s dying, an excuse for their sinning. God’s *long-suffering* a reason for their *long impenitency*. The *mercy* of Heaven, the cause of their *misery* in hell. Were there no other argument for a *devil* that helps men to sin, and to direct them the nearest way to hell, these facts would be to me quite convincing. For, although I fully believe in the inherent wickedness of the human heart, I could hardly conceive how otherwise men could be so forsaken of their understanding and conscience, or how these could so lose the control of them. Ah! sir, a sweeter flower than that of divine mercy never blossomed beneath “*the sun of righteousness*”! It is a *honey-flower*, for all of a repenting or heaven-born nature. But alas! vast numbers, *wasp-like*, suck poison out of it, or that which, by some sort of infernal *chemistry* (for the want of a better word), is converted into moral poison.

However, and a sad thought it is, every finally impenitent sinner finds out at last that God is *just*, as well as *merciful*.

He gives *time* for repentance, and "many a second thought." But when *mercy*, freely offered, with precious *time* to accept, become but drugs, God relieves them of both, and lets them have justice and eternity instead; and, generally at an unexpected hour, when they are neither *aware* of nor *willing* for such a change. Ah! how many of my hearers of past years have been arrested by death, and posted off with very little ceremony to the scenes of *judgment*; some of them, alas! like that active business-man, who, feeling his departure to be unavoidable, exclaimed to his physician, "Doctor, I have made every preparation for *living*, and now I must die, though utterly unprepared for it." Such cases are by no means rare, and *sad, sad* scenes they are. Beware, sir, that death does not find you in a similar situation.

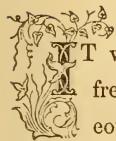
God is represented in the Book of Psalms as "*whetting his sword, bending his bow, and preparing his arrows on the string, against the face of them*"—sinners who trifle with his threatenings. And also, as *preparing* for them "*the instruments of death.*" Having called upon them in vain to seek wisdom upon earth, he sends them to learn it in *hell*. I was struck with the following remark: "God may say of some of you very soon, 'Seeing they will not be *wise* upon earth, let them learn to be wise in hell, and let eternal torments teach them.'" Terrible thought! It must come to that, I suppose, with all sinners who are finally sent from earth to perdition. In this you may have a glimpse how *being* may be continued, and not *well-being*. The distinction is evident, but the terrible demonstrations of it can only be fully known

"In the great dungeons of the unforgiven."

Be wise in time. The earth, as a Welsh preacher strikingly observed, is emptying its inhabitants into hell very fast. Ay, and the destroying angel is passing over this land with rapid strides; and woe be to you when he stops at your door and finds you unmarked, and unprotected by the blood of the *Pass-over Lamb*. Beware of *presumption*. It sends more sinners to hell than despair. "God is merciful! God is merciful!" shouted a few *young converts* in the ear of a *distressed* and despairing *young man*. "Yes," said he, "God is merciful, but he is also just, and his justice will cut me down." He came very near blowing his brains out, but God interposed and saved him. He preached the Gospel with great power afterward, and is now, I trust, in Paradise. His case, perilous as it was, was hardly so desperate as that of him who considers God's *long-suffering* "*slackness*," and "*the goodness of God*," designed "*to lead*" him "*to repentance*," as an argument for presumption to encourage him in *impenitence*.

CHAPTER XVII.

TO ANOTHER—REVIEWING.



IT was a happy time, to me and many; but not entirely free from the accompaniments of human frailties, I confess! Extemporaneous preaching seems peculiarly liable to them; especially if the mind of the preacher be susceptible of emotion from what he may behold transpiring in the audience at the moment. A little more self-command would have been of advantage. It so happens, that the employments and scenes of the day usually influence my preaching at night—whether in reading, writing, answering letters, or excursionizing—giving a hue and a coloring to my style in the pulpit, or on the platform. There are some minds which resemble the transparent surface of a lake, where the sun, the moon, or stars may mirror themselves; and the clouds—sunny or thunderous; the mountains too, and rocks and cliffs, and trees; the eagle and the sparrow, raindrops, sunbeams, and waterfall! A piece of poetry, written in 1825, caused that movement of the fancy—for poetry, like romance, is bewitching. The poetry I did not repeat, because I could not, but the sentiments came forth in a state of transposition! *Fancy* furnished thus with wings, excursionized; yet not, I trust, regardless of Mrs. Osgood's "rule of caution":

ARROWS FROM MY QUIVER.

“Let fancy fly her fairy kite,
 And light with *wit* its wing, dear;
 But oh! lest it go out of sight,
 Bid *reason* hold the string, dear!

“For, soaring where the poet’s heaven
 With starry gems is spangled,
 It might, by folly’s zephyr driven,
 In moonshine get entangled!”

That little particle “*so*,” what an immensity of meaning there is in it! Jesus did not attempt to describe it. Neither did John, who recorded it. And it may well stand over as the theme of eternity! “*God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten son, that*,” etc. No man, attempting to ponder this text for the pulpit, that does not feel his imagination put under an arrest by “*so loved*.” And it is only when under the excitement and warmth of public speaking, he is bold enough to attempt its *expansion*! Oh! how poor and weak the richest *imagery*, or strongest figures of comparison! springs, brooks, lakes, rivers, oceans—blades of grass, foliage of summer trees, flowers, shrubs, forests—sun and moon and stars—immensity—all that takes the name of water, vegetable matter, space, all fall infinitely short, and the mind, like the dove of the deluge, is glad to return to the Ark—to Jesus, the gift of the Father’s love, and softly and humbly say to all around—

“Could we with ink the ocean fill,
 Was the whole earth of parchment made,
 Was every single stick a quill,
 Was every man a scribe by trade;

To write *the love of God* alone,
 Would drain the ocean dry,
 Nor would the scroll contain the whole,
 Though stretch'd from pole to sky!"

And, oh! how sweet to rest and triumph there! and sing—

"A *way* he is to lost ones that have strayed;
 A *robe* he is to such as naked be;
 If any hungry, to all such he is *bread*;
 Is any weak, in Him how strong is he!
 To him that's dead he's *life*, to sick men health;
Eyes to the blind, and to the poor man wealth."

I rested in Jesus at last, did I not! And when there, found my *heart-breaking, heart-softening argument!* And if your heart was not melted, it was of more solid metal, likely, than the rest—that is all! If all the angels of heaven had lent their assistance in those profundities and altitudes of comparison, we had still been infinitely short! "*Thanks be unto God for the UNSPEAKABLE gift,*" will, most likely, be the exclamation of eternity! the *climax* of our contemplations of it—the *chorus* of our songs!

The entire *fifty-third* chapter of Isaiah I commend to your attention. It is impossible you can apply it to any other that ever existed upon the earth than Jesus Christ. One in Germany, after quoting "*The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all,*" "*The chastisement of our peace was upon him,*" thanked God that such was the case! adding that otherwise he could not have made room for the conviction in his heart that his sins would not be imputed to him, even if an angel from heaven had brought him the intelligence, unless, at the

same time, he had been told what had become of the sins thus taken from him; that nothing here below could be plainer to him than this, that his blood-red sins could not be pardoned arbitrarily, or overlooked, or unnoticed as trifles of no account. If so, how could he any longer believe in a just and holy God? But when told in the Gospel, not only of his *misdeeds*, but how they were transferred to him who appeared in his place, even "*the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world*"—even *his* sins—and thus beholding such an intervention, he could no longer doubt, but was enabled sensibly to grasp the legal ground of his absolution. "It is for my sins which he atones, and my debt which he liquidates;" and thus he could throw himself rejoicing into the arms of everlasting mercy!

That "*the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us—and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*"—is a "marvel" to you, I marvel not! it has been so to the greatest minds of all ages. Junius, centuries ago, was reclaimed from atheism by the same divine declaration. He tells us that the New Testament lay open in his study, upon which he carelessly turned his eye, and found himself arrested by the strange majesty and profound mystery of John i. 1-14, and that by further meditation and inquiry, it led to his conversion! St. Paul exclaims, "*Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh—seen of angels,*" etc. A "marvel" indeed, the more you consider it; for, as godly Flavel observed, if we beheld the *sun* to fall from his sphere, and to become a wandering *atom*, or an angel turned out of heaven, and converted into a *fly* or a *worm*, the abasement would not equal the incarnation of the Son of God, when he took upon him our

nature, became a man, and obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!

To *comprehend* this great mystery is one thing, to *believe* it is another. A *nutshell* may sooner contain all the water of the sea than your intellect comprehend this amazing fact. Nor is it any *disparagement* to your intellect. A Trinity in Unity, and a God manifest in the flesh, would require a Doctor Angelicus from heaven! The mysterious union of your own *spirit* with your body—if you will allow yourself time to think closely—you will find it sufficiently incomprehensible to master your “intellectual capacity,” let alone the profound doctrine of the Holy Trinity. This mystery of your own existence you will find quite as inaccessible to your understanding, I fancy, as the sublime declaration, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God; all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” (John i.) Is Jesus Christ “second to God” here? Is he subordinate to God the Father? What thinkest thou? With regard to your difficulty in believing in that which has not been revealed to your senses, have patience, my friend! It shall be so, by and by—in another state of being! Till then, you must allow *faith* a place among your senses, for it is a gracious sense. It is to your soul what *eyesight* is to your body. Without eyesight, what a blank the world would be to you! “*Faith* is the eye of the new-born soul,” says Mr. Wesley, “whereby every true believer seeth Him who is invisible—seeth the light of the

glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." *Faith* is light also; what light is to your natural eye, such is faith to "the eyes of your understanding." What you read in the Bible challenges not your eyesight alone, but your faith. You must see those things through "the eyes of your understanding" which you read through the eyes of your body. Now, observe, however good may be your natural sight, *light* is wanting. If you would read the Bible, apply the idea to your intellectual eyes, and the necessity of supernatural light, and you have my idea of faith.

" Faith lends its realizing light,
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly;
The invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye."

It is by this *gracious sense*—faith—you are to obtain salvation here. (Rom. v. 1.) If you neglect this indispensable aid, and resort to your other senses, forcing them to do the work of faith, which is impossible, you must be ruined hereafter. Observe, *seeing, knowing, feeling* may not coexist with eternal salvation. Think of this fact in time. In eternity the knowledge of the fact may do you no good. "*Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*" Believe now, by the heaven-appointed means, while you may. "*Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*" But, alas! who can describe the wretchedness of those in eternity who refused to believe until the sense of *seeing* and *feeling*, too, were brought into action!

A remark on Rom. viii. 16. The doctrine is mysterious somewhat, but not beyond the range of reason and illustration. It is *reasonable*, if God forgives our sins, and a reconciliation

has been effected between Him and us, that he should by some means acquaint us with the fact. And what other means could be devised, more satisfactory and safe, than by His *Holy Spirit*?—the third person in the Godhead, one of the Divine Persons to whom you were dedicated in *baptism*. (Matthew xxviii. 19.) Distinctly recognized also in the apostolic benediction (2 Cor. xiii. 14), which you may consult at your leisure. “*The communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all.*” Ponder that word, “*communion*,” which implies intercourse, friendship, fellowship. If such is the privilege of “*all*” whose sins are forgiven, there is nothing *unreasonable* in supposing that in that intercourse He imparts such an impression or assurance of forgiveness and adoption into the family of God as is perfectly satisfactory. Consider farther: you find no difficulty in convincing persons in your employ, or domestic circle, that you are pleased or displeased with them, and yet maintain silence all the while. The expression of your countenance conveys that at your will. If so, what can you find so contrary to reason, either in that expression of Scripture, “*Thou wilt make me full of joy with thy countenance;*” or, “*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God?*” Follow this train of reasoning, and much of the difficulty will disappear; although I apprise you that mere *theory* without *experience* will leave the matter dubious still, and uncertain to your understanding.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HOLY TRINITY.



WITH regard to the *Trinity*, the doctrine so shines before our eyes in the Scriptures we cannot help but believe it. We must allow the fact, or some portions of the word of God are unintelligible. We are commanded to baptize “*in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*” (Matthew xxviii. 19.) Here are *three distinct* persons. Can anything be plainer? Here, in the “*name*” of a “*Godhead*” of three distinct persons, we behold an entire and eternal consecration of a human being, to serve, honor, and love that Godhead for ever and ever!—*Father, Son, and Spirit.* For the term *Godhead*, see Acts xvii. 29, Rom. i. 20, and Col. ii. 9.

Again, we are authorized by apostolical example to dismiss the people from the place of divine worship in the name of the same *divine three*: “*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all.*” Can any one find a foundation for a doubt that St. Paul was convinced there was a *personality* in this *ever-blessed* and *undivided Trinity*? Never would he have so expressed himself had he otherwise believed. Other texts might be quoted, but these are sufficient. Now, observe, no comment—no explana-

tion is given us; and yet, the *Divine Being* knew how *incomprehensible* the idea of *three distinct persons*, and these *three one God*, would be to all generations of men! How evident it is that he designed the fact revealed to be an article of faith, to be *believed* rather than comprehended—to be admitted rather than understood? Thus, we find, as if by one consent, *Christians* commonly stop at what they *understand*. There they confine their *reason*. All they find revealed beyond this they consider as belonging entirely to the province of *faith*. This has been a peculiarity of Christians generally from the earliest times. If any exception may be claimed, history traces the fault, not to the *laity*, but to the *ministry*—to men who would be wise above that which is written, and who allowed their reason to intrude upon the province of faith. Thus, we find Hilary of Poitiers, of the fourth century, clearing the laity of all blame, stating that the *populace* of that time kept the true and right faith regarding the Trinity, when several of the ministers, by prying too far into it, had the misfortune to lose it.

And now, with regard to *yourself* and this doctrine, there are other *trinities*, besides, upon which you had better, perhaps, first exercise your “intellectual capacity”—like a school-boy (pardon me), who must first master his *alphabet*, etc., before he attempts to exercise his powers upon the higher branches of education and science. There is a trinity in your own person—body, soul, and spirit, and yet you are but *one man*. Have you mastered all the mystery there is about that one fact, think you? Did you resolve to do so before you believed it? The *king of day* presents you with a trinity in himself—substance, beams, and heat—yet *one sun*. You believe this to be a fact,

but did you *comprehend* it before you believed? Do you understand the secret of this mysterious union to the present day? I fear not, sir! The element of *water* a few months since resolved itself into a trinity, you remember—hail, snow, and ice—yet it was *water only!* You *believed* that, of course; but did you first make yourself master of those mysterious operations of the elements that brought about the phenomena? or did you not rather just believe the fact, so clearly stated upon the page of nature before your door—as the Christian believes the doctrine of the Trinity, as stated upon the page of revelation before his eyes, without troubling himself about what is incomprehensible? If you can believe without being able to explain all the mysteries connected with this triad of trinities, it cannot be so difficult, I fancy, for you to receive and believe the doctrine of the Trinity, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures!

Nevertheless, I would not conceal from you a fact. It is this: I strongly incline to believe, with a judicious and eminent man, that I know not how any one can be a Christian believer in the doctrine of the Trinity till he has, as St. John says, "*the witness in himself;*" till the Spirit of God witnesses with his spirit that he is a child of God; that is, in effect, till *God the Holy Ghost* witnesses that *God the Father* has accepted him through the merits of *God the Son*; and, having this witness, he honors the *Son* and the blessed *Spirit* "*even as he honors the Father.*" Oh! beware how you disown or doubt this glorious and essential article in the Christian creed. Infidelity has many forms, and rely upon it, that scheme which would destroy the *divinity* of the *Son* and *Holy Ghost* is one of them. Jesus "*thought it not robbery*

to be equal with God" (Phil. ii. 6); but he will think it robbery, double robbery, to deprive him and the Spirit of divine honors in any human mind. He cannot be a Christian who would attempt it. To do this is to justify the Jews in condemning him to death; and what is this but to "*crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame*"? (Heb. vi. 6.) "To this hour" (to use a remark of a German divine), "to this hour the tradition exists among the Jews, that Christ was crucified because he made himself equal with God, and therefore guilty of blasphemy." We know also that they had previously sought to stone him for the same cause, giving as a reason—"for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." (John x. 33.) Can any thing be plainer than this, that he who seeks to view Christ as less than God, brands him as a blasphemer as well as a robber, joins in spirit with those who sought to stone him, and, with the Jews, convicts him as being worthy of death? How can a Socinian be saved?

* * * * *

So your "friend" has proved the hint of the old poet fearfully true, regarding the Divinity of Christ—I mean the disbelief of it, and consequences—

" Like him that knew not poison's power to kill,
Until, by tasting it, himself was slain."

He is not the only one that has lived and died a witness that "he who believes not when he might, cannot when he would." But, as he is still above ground, there is hope. His friend invited me, challenged me into the Scripture field, where I felt quite at home. My fortress, if I may change the figure, has

long been the sacred volume. When weak, there has been my strength; when strong, and girding for the conflict, or arming for the battle, there I have selected my weapons. I have never been fond of the open debatable commons where infidels choose to fight, though often solicited. The subject at that time was by no means exhausted, as you have seen by my late remarks; but enough was said to answer the purpose.*

To-day, when reading a work by an eminent German divine, I was struck with the following: "Many in the present age are never clear in their own minds about the person of Christ. Though they were to say a hundred times, with apparent conviction, that Jesus was nothing more than a man, yet it only requires that the Gospel, with its sacred imagery, be once expanded before them, and they are no longer able to utter the words with the same confidence. An obscure feeling which pervades their minds objects to it; and when they try to defend the bulwark of their unbelief, nothing is left them but by constraint to belie the voice of truth within them." And he assigns as a reason, that a proper recognition of Christ would cost them the delight they experience in the service of the world and sin.

In showing the danger of resisting the Spirit of Truth in matters of doctrine as well as practice, he relates a mournful anecdote of a well-known learned man of Saxony, who, after having all his life long attacked Jesus and his Gospel with all the weapons of sophistry, was in his old days partially deprived of his reason, chiefly through the fear of death, and frequently fell into religious paroxysms of a peculiar nature. He was

* See my "CONFLICTS WITH SKEPTICS," Chapters XL., XLI., XLII.

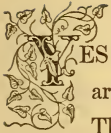
almost daily observed conversing with himself, while pacing to and fro in his chamber, on one of the walls of which, between other pictures, hung one of the *Saviour*. Repeatedly he halted before the latter, and said, in a horrifying tone of voice, "After all, thou wast only a man!" Then, after a short pause, he would continue, "What wast thou more than a man? Ought I to worship thee? No, I will not worship thee, for thou art only Rabbi Jesus, Joseph's son, of Nazareth." Uttering these words, he would return with a deeply-affected countenance, and exclaim, "What dost thou say? That thou camest from above? How terribly thou eyest me! Oh! thou art dreadful! But thou art only a man, after all." Then, he would again rush away, but soon return with faltering step, crying out, "What! art thou in reality the Son of God?" In this way the same scenes were daily renewed, till the unhappy man, struck by paralysis, dropped down dead, and then really stood before his Judge, who, even in his picture, had so strikingly and overpoweringly judged him. Ah! my friend, it is a perilous exercise of mind to argue against Jesus! To try to degrade Jesus, to rob him of Godhead honors, to attempt to tear the crown of deity from his brow, is a species of mental rebellion for which the Almighty reserves his heaviest frowns and severest condemnation.

As a contrast, allow me to relate an anecdote, which was told me by a gentleman, while riding through a certain part of Wales. The sad story of that poor sinner in Saxony brought it forcibly to my mind. A young gentleman of fortune, who had large estates in England, arrived at the mansion of his aunt, thoughtless and wicked. The lady, in honor of the occasion, proposed a ball, and a large company of the *élite* of the

place were invited. The assemblage collected on the night appointed; and while the young man, with not one serious thought about divine things, was leading his partner around in the giddy whirl of the dance, his eye glanced at a picture of Christ crowned with thorns suspended from the wall. The sight saddened his spirits. Again he glanced at the picture, and felt a painful sensation at his heart, and he mentally exclaimed, "If that be a fact, this cannot be right." His thoughts troubled him. The ball continued to go off charmingly, as they say, but all his comfort seemed to be at an end. An idea came to his relief—to step forward to the picture, and quietly turn its face to the wall. He did so, but experienced no relief, perhaps even felt worse in viewing it thus. The image haunted his imagination, and the words, "*If that be a fact, this cannot be right.*" The ball ended, the people dispersed, and he retired to his room unhappy. He danced no more—sought divine mercy, and, my informant believed, obtained it, and devoted himself and fortune to Christ and his cause for ever, which, in view of the crown of thorns, and in remembrance of Him who wore it on his bleeding brow, he considered only his duty. I was informed he had already built two alms-houses, where he had collected the poor and needy and infirm, and supported them. How various the ways in which sinners are converted! Providence is continually illustrating that notable declaration in 1 Cor. xii. 4, 7, where we find three divine persons acknowledged in differences of administrations and diversities of operations in the salvation of fallen man, and conducting believers through scenes of holiness and usefulness to heaven.

CHAPTER XIX.

TO ANOTHER—PROSOPOPŒIA.



ES! my "pulpit style is unequal," because my *themes* are unequal, and therefore demand difference of style. That which was suitable to the *day of judgment*, last Sabbath evening, would have been very unsuitable for that phase of Christian experience on Tuesday night, "*This is the will of God, even your sanctification.*" The style demanded by that text a few weeks since, "*The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever,*" would not have been seemly for "*Little children, love one another.*" My hearers differ. Much of my style is regulated, as a matter of course, by respect for the characters addressed. It would not be proper to pursue the same method with a humble believer seeking a "*clean heart,*" and "*perfect love which casteth out fear,*" as if I were seeking the conversion of a skeptic regarding all religion.

2. Orators, pulpit orators, who are determined to support a reputation for eloquence, and being great preachers, are careful to select those subjects and texts in which they may appear to the best advantage. *Lower themes*, demanding "a lesser style," consequently involving "inequality of style," they deem it their duty to leave to the care of *second* or *third* rate preachers, as they view them. Hence it is seldom that such

meddle with the doctrine of sanctification and perfect love, and other phases of Christian experience, which demand simplicity of style. They can shine but in a certain way, and upon some great topics; and to disappoint public expectation would be a calamity. Such men may draw large congregations, but seldom have any *revival*. The removal of such an one reacts fearfully upon a Methodist congregation, unless another of equal talent in that line, can be procured to take his place. Had he succeeded in leaving his admirers truly converted to God, the effects of the change would not have been so disastrous. Other denominations, who retain their ministers for many years, do not feel it so much. When they have such an orator, if financially able to cope with "calls" from other congregations, they may retain him a lifetime. In Methodism, the itinerating principle interferes. As to *disadvantages* and *advantages*, much might be said on both sides! Having said thus much, disclaiming all personalities, or reference to any minister in this city, or to any one who may have occupied this pulpit in bygone years, I proceed to another topic.

3. It will hardly answer your purpose to say much against *personification* in oratory, as all antiquity, you must be aware, stands so fully committed in its favor. It has long been the *handmaid* of eloquence, true eloquence—simplicity and grandeur, informed with heavenly flame—warming the heart while it feasts the fancy, and clear up also to the mark of frank and fearless truth; stirring the soul and the conscience—weaving its embroidery over the imagination, but, like the eloquence of Pericles of Athens, leaving *needles* in the minds of the people! covering the hearers with bouquet of *roses*, but planting the thorns in their consciences!

4. *Personification* is the *prosopopœia* of the Grecians—a rhetorical privilege, dear and familiar to all the best orators of ancient times. It is *classical* therefore, ay, and scriptural too, and that places it under the patronage of the highest *classic* authority—the *Bible*. In my younger days I satisfied myself by placing it in the front rank, as to antiquity, purity, sublimity, and importance, with regard to the readiness and certainty of its effects upon an audience, either in religion, politics, or science; nor have I yet altered my opinion. It is the art by which *things* are made *persons*, in which natural objects, animate and inanimate, are endowed with intelligence, and voice, clothed, for the time being, with the attributes of mind and language;—even the sun and moon and stars,—

“For ever singing, as they shine,
The hand that formed us is divine!”

5. When but a stripling, and the Spirit of the Lord began to move me at times to preach the Gospel, as he moved one of old, when a youth, against the Philistines, “*in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol*”—he amid the mountains of Judea, your friend among the mountains of the Highlands, near West Point, N. Y., a humble student in the Cold Spring Academy—I remember scanning those great barriers of nature, while a voice seemed whispering within, that if attentive to nature and divine suggestion, I might discover, in this and other scenery, points, colorings, positions, and aspects, which would be of great service in the pulpit, for the elucidation of truth, and which add greatly to its vividness and effect. The thought awakened in me an attention to Nature which has influenced my mind ever since.

6. The apostle tells us, “*There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.*” (1 Cor. xiv. 10.) Opening upon a passage in the Book of Psalms, I read a call to the sun and moon and stars to assume a voice and praise the Lord! The heaven of heavens also, and the waters above the heavens, and the fire and hail and snow, vapors and stormy winds, sweeping to and fro beneath the heavens, to lift up their voices and praise the Lord! And the earth, with its mountains and hills, fruitful trees and goodly cedars, its beasts and cattle and creeping things and flying fowl; and all the instruments of music among the Jews, trumpet, psaltry, harp, and timbrel, stringed instruments and organs, loud cymbals and high-sounding cymbals—all to unite with kings and people, princes and judges, young men and maidens, old men and children, and with angels and all the hosts of heaven, to praise the Lord! And again, in another part of the sacred volume, the ocean, in all its multitudes of waves, is lifting up its hands to God, the floods also lifting up their voice, the mountains and the hills breaking forth into singing, and all the trees of the fields clapping their hands! The Bible is the book in which to study *prosopopœia*, and in a higher sense than ever Grecian or Roman orator or poet imagined. “Extravagance” is a convenient phrase in criticism, but you will hardly venture to apply it to the inspired volume.

7. Another instance just occurs to me—the deputation of trees to the trees, with a design to *select* a king from among them—which was easily done, but not so easily carried into effect, for the trees refused the honor! (Judges ix.) The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them, and they said unto the olive tree, “Reign thou over us.” But the olive tree

said, "Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go to be promoted over trees?" And the trees said to the fig tree, "Come thou and reign over us." But the fig tree said unto them, "Should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over trees?" Then said they unto the vine, "Come thou and reign over us." And the vine said unto them, "Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over trees?" Then said all the trees unto the bramble, "Come thou and reign over us." And the bramble said, "If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow; and, if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon." That was Jotham's political speech against the men of Shechem, who had met to make Abimelech king. He lifted up his voice from the top of Mount Gerizim, introducing his speech thus: "*Hearken unto me, ye men of Schechem, that God may hearken unto you.*" And then he introduced the *fable* of the trees. Here, sir, we find the oldest *fable* in the world; nor has there ever been from the most ancient times a rhetorical prosopopœia so expressive as this, or so ancient. The Bible is a wonderful book.

8. Lord Byron's description of a thunder-storm among the Alps is an instance worthy of note, the thunder-peals reverberating from crag to crag:

" And Jura answers through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps that call to her aloud!"

The mountains thus calling and replying to each other is highly sublime. That beautiful hymn by Addison is another instance:

“The spacious firmament on high,
 With all the blue etherial sky,
 The spangled heavens,” etc.

Read the entire hymn, in which you will find the overarching sky proclaiming its great original, the unwearied sun publishing his Creator's power, the moon repeating to the listening earth her birth-story, while stars and planets burning around her proclaim the tidings, and spread the truth from pole to pole. True, it is admitted, of course, that no real voice or sound comes from them, and that round this dark terrestrial ball they move on in solemn silence; yet—


“In reason's ear they all rejoice,
 And utter forth a glorious voice,
 For ever singing, as they shine,
 The hand that formed us is divine!”

9. Well then, and suppose I do sometimes solicit the aid of Nature, and “set her mutes a-talking,” and what is “worse, even devils and lost spirits;”—seeing that for doing the *first*, I have the examples set forth in Scripture—only a few of which I have had time to notice—and indeed the example of the masters of ancient and modern literature, to say nothing of the practice of orators from time immemorial. And, for attempting the second—setting angels and disembodied spirits “a-talking” in the ears of my audience—I have little to say. I would rather hide myself behind my Lord and Master's example in that department of “oratory”! Instance the story of Dives and Lazarus. And if that does not altogether satisfy you, perhaps you might be better pleased with a reference to the example set us by Homer and Virgil. Christians, however, never treat disrespectfully a license quietly taken, under

extraordinary circumstances, from a method of instruction adopted by their Lord and mine—sparingly, indeed, I admit—but, who, as a judicious divine observes, evoked spirits from heaven and from hell to attest an intermediate state—as if he would have us read the doctrine by the lurid glare of infernal flames, and by the radiance of a celestial vision. My *allusion* was bold, but, of course, nothing more than a supposition—imaginary, if you please. Yet, allowing the *facts* of religion, and the way in which sinful men treat them, and that these “spiritual creatures” know what is going on upon earth, it was by no means unreasonable. Besides, the constant accessions to the numbers of the damned in hell, and the saved in heaven, must be the means of imparting a vast amount of information, gathered from various parts of the earth. Can it be irrational to suppose that they do hold conversations together regarding these things? I think not. This is all I have to say upon the subject at present.

CHAPTER XX.

TO — : A PLAIN TALK WITH "A PLAIN MAN."

ERHAPS you are not far astray in one impression—that "the Bible is an intolerant book." For it certainly will not tolerate contradiction. A book in which we find such expressions as these, is not to be trifled with: "*He that believeth not God hath made him a liar*"—"Let God be true, but every man a liar"—"*He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*" Not much toleration there, I confess. It spurns all discount upon its decisions—demands the reception of every *promise* at par; and every declaration for all that is "on the face of it"—admitted for negotiation "at sight"—instant credit for every threatening and doctrine, precept and promise, to which is attached a "Thus saith the Lord." The intolerance of the Bible is, that it takes every man, book, or paper for an *enemy*, that is not a friend. It is the only book in the world that is truly and essentially dogmatical. All its decisions are *authoritative* and *positive*. If my preaching shows something of the same spirit, it arises from an honest conviction that I assert nothing but what the Bible asserts. Detect me, in matters of doctrine, at variance with the Book, and I will "strike my colors" at once!

A question just here: Has it never occurred to you, that the *distinction* between our Lord's teaching, and that of the scribes and Pharisees, may be traced to the same principle? They taught from tradition, rather than from the word of God. Hence they were "very *argumentative*," maybe. The matter of their preaching, not having the seal of "*Thus saith the Lord*," needed it—needed all the arguments which their brains and genius could master. But being without divine authority, their arguments were without force and energy, frequently frivolous, puerile, ridiculous, and therefore of little weight with their hearers. But when our Lord taught the people, they were, says Matthew, "*astonished at his doctrine*;" and, like a true philosopher, he gives a substantial reason—"For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. vii. 28, 29)—bold, commanding, weighty, and powerful, carrying awe, astonishment, and conviction into every heart; so widely contrasted with the effects produced by the trifling teaching of the Pharisees and the timid teaching of the scribes.

You will therefore, I hope, sir, give me some credit for having given some attention to these matters, as well as yourself—that if you have a "principle of criticism," which the stranger, in your opinion, violates, he has a *principle of action* which violates no principle of the word of God, but is entirely in harmony with it. And were you as acute in mental philosophy as you are in a certain kind of criticism, you would account otherwise for those earnest cries for mercy which attend and follow this order of preaching. "*Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.*" What are *they*? The *threatenings* of the Lord against all workers of iniquity. These we

enforce with all the powers we can draw from heaven. Nor do we cease such cannonading until fear and trembling and deep conviction seize upon the hearts of our hearers.

We abide by the law of the Lord our God as the great instrumentality in the hand of the Spirit to awaken and convict men. "But, the Gospel! the Gospel! what becomes of the Gospel? What have you done with the Gospel?" I reply, we keep it in sight—*within call*; and when the *law* has done its work in piling up sentences of condemnation in the hearts of sinners, and their entire soul is thrown into one region of *alarm*, and the cry is ready to break forth, "*God be merciful to me a sinner!*" when, by look or expression, that Pentecostal question comes forth, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" then the Gospel, in all its freeness and power, is called into the field; and if "the slain of the Lord" were many, the saved of the Lord are many also!

Thus, my friend, our spiritual tactics are before you in all simplicity. We have nothing to conceal. We aim first to lay the sinner under the *bands* of fear, and then cast him into *conviction* for sin. Repentance and a desire for pardon is a result. Jesus Christ is then set forth as the Lamb of God that taketh away sin and condemnation. The scenes of Calvary are presented to soften the heart, and the tenderness, the yearning tenderness of God; and, to exorcise despair, we use the *promises*. To prevent procrastination, we drive the awakened upon that "narrow neck of land," of which the poet speaks, "'twixt two unbounded seas"—a heaven and a hell; urging that "a point of time, a moment's space" may seal his destiny forever. We press him to a decision by awakening a fear of sinning unto death, by quenching the Spirit;

urging on his conscience that terrifying intimation of St. John, which it pleases the Spirit of God to apply often with very great force—"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin not unto death" (1 John v. 16, 17)—and that caution of Paul, "*Quench not the Spirit.*" You have been a witness of the effects, if not a subject of them! But, how many thousands of sinners have I seen made "*the prisoners of the Lord*" upon this narrow and decisive peninsula! ay! and brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God!

Thus it is written: "*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*" "*For our God is a consuming fire.*" I never yet have found a Universalist who could cope with these two declarations. They are more than a match for sophistry. We have no lack of proof in this life, emphasizing most fearfully the certain execution of those threatenings in eternity. We find the term fear, *fear of God* and *fear of the Lord*, repeated, in one connection or other, in the Scriptures, no less than between *one and two hundred times*.

The venerable Sibbs used to call fear "*the awe-band of the soul!*" Can you doubt we have the approbation of Heaven when we seek to buckle this *band* on the souls of giddy and God-provoking sinners? We do so, and God helps us; and some of them cry out for help, as if within the folds of a boa-constrictor! We do not abandon such to their fate, but cry to God for them, offering salvation, by faith in Christ, to all such. Nor do we give over in many cases till they find it, and are able joyfully to declare, "*We have redemption through*

His blood, the forgiveness of sins ;” “ *God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*” (2 Tim. i. 7.) To this is added that blessed assurance recorded in Rom. viii. 15, 16. Converse with such, my friend, and tell me if ever you have met with a happier people !

The style of preaching with which you find fault, may have seemed to you “ *cruel and tyrannical ;*” and so might seem the action of a surgeon’s knife, unless made acquainted with the fact that the life of the patient depended upon it. It is no cruelty to cause a sinner to suffer a few mental agonies, if thereby he may be saved from suffering *the bitter pains of eternal death.* What thinkest thou ? Hearken unto our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew xviii. 8, 9. Here you perceive that the loss of a *hand*, or a *foot*, or an *eye*, in order to preserve a good conscience and save the soul, is better than to have them all, or any one of them, and to be *cast into hell fire !*

If you believe in *angelic agency*, you can find no difficulty, surely, in recognizing *satanic agency*, or “ *the devil and his angels ;*” for the existence of both is plainly declared in the Scriptures. Also, that they have much to do with earth. If there exist not legions of wicked spiritual beings in evil activities, between holy angels and men, the antagonists of God, and the enemies of our race, the Bible is the most deceptive book in the world !

Satan ! may God preserve us both from his power ! But he is the most *formidable* enemy man has to contend against, and really the least feared. The Bible represents him as an ugly and treacherous being, a hard customer to have any dealings with. He is called “ Satan,” because an enemy, and a cunning one. “ Devil ”—mind, at its worst—a being disposed

to shoot through and pierce everything that is good beneath the sun. A "*dragon*," because of his fierceness and power. "*The wicked one*," from the sinuosity and crookedness of his disposition and plans. "*The old serpent*," cunning, subtle, deadly. "*Apollyon*"—a *destroyer*—in whom the desire is intense as the flames of hell. "*A roaring lion*," because of the rage and cruelty of his nature, and his sagacity and constant aptitude, like his namesake among animals, to prey upon and devour the unwary and the helpless. "*The accuser of the brethren*," arising from his *envious* nature—the cause of so much uneasiness and sorrow to their tender and weak consciences; and often of so much disorder and perplexity in the Church of Christ.

He is also called an "adversary," in the Scriptures, because of his malignant and wrathful disposition; being adverse to both God and man;—as a poet says :

"There is but *one* who cannot love,
That anarch of the thrones above;
Apostate, in whose sleepless eyes
A hell of burning hatred lies;
Whose torture is the undying sense
Of unadored omnipotence;
A withered, dark, defeated mind,
That curses Heaven, and scorns mankind."

He is named a "*tormentor*" also, from the *anguish* he excites in sincere souls—an effect of his malice. A "*tempter*," by reason of his constant solicitations to sin. He is called "*a murderer*," and that "*from the beginning*"—the *cause* of all forms of *death*, from the beginning of the world to the present

time. "A liar" is another title of his—his nature is falsehood and deception.

Such is the being against whom you were warned the other evening. But you think, "Devil is an ugly word," and dislike to hear it in the pulpit—as much as hell, no doubt! If but a meaningless word, and a representative of nothing, in your estimation, I do not wonder at it. But it calls up an unpleasant idea, does it not? *Words* represent things, and your name is expressed in a couple of words, and they represent *yourself*; a matter of considerable importance, regarding that property of which you claim to be the rightful owner! Apply it to the case in hand, and you have my idea. *Words* are not to be despised; though only *sounds*, yet they may stand connected with a substance and a reality, as the sound of *your own name!*

If but "a mythical being," you think "silence in the pulpit regarding him would be more for the honor of God." Ay! if only *mythical!* but if a *real personage*, such as he is described to be in the Scriptures, and as Jesus Christ, in the wilderness of Judea, proved him to be, that alters the case, does it not? And should it not rather exalt the character of God, when we announce from his own word his repeated *warnings* to us regarding this *malicious* enemy of the human race? Come, my dear sir! "think over the matter" once more! The question has *another side*, you perceive!

* * * * *

Your "further thoughts" are what one would expect from your *former* ones! The plain facts are these: God is set forth in the Bible as a supremely great and good Being; yet terrible in justice, in power and wrath—even to "*the fierceness*

and wrath of Almighty God." (Rev. xix. 15.) These facts of Scripture drive infidels to their "wits' end," and some of them out of their wits, in opposing and denying the God of the Bible, and forming a being after their own imaginations, heathen fashion—to smile complacency upon them and their evil passions.

Baxter observes, there are some things in God that most people like very well—his *mercy* and his *goodness*, for instance; and there are some things in the Devil which wicked people do not like—his *hatred* of human beings, and his *cruelty* in tormenting them. But there are qualities in God they do not like—his holiness and justice, and unchangeable opposition to sin; but there are qualities in Satan not altogether repugnant to them—his unholiness, and friendship for their sensuality. Nor can I conclude without trying to beat into the ear of your conscience another idea of Baxter—that unless you lay aside your fleshly mind and interests, which are opposed to the welfare of your soul, you shall, so sure as you are a man, be judged and damned as an enemy to God! Here I pause, hoping for good results—conviction and salvation—unless you are

"Boldly resolved, against conviction steeled,
Nor inward truth, nor outward fact to yield."

CHAPTER XXI.

TO "A FRIEND"—FLOWERY PREACHING.



FLOWERS have been named by some poet "the gems of Nature's robe." The Bible offers a vast variety of such gems wherewith a preacher may adorn his discourse. The Holy Spirit, however, made no use of artificial flowers, but gathered for us the choice and flower of all things, and clothed them with purity and beauty, and allows the public teacher to make his own selection, as judgment or taste may dictate. I confess to a fondness for gemming my discourse with these, and with those which the gay fields of poetry afford; that is, when in my judgment the spiritual atmosphere is congenial. And if my friend will have patience, he may find himself regaled by and by with the sweet fragrance of these luxuries of oratory; but they would be much out of place at present, I have been thinking. Have patience with me. There are seasons when such flowers would wither and die, if placed in the bosom of a discourse; would appear as much out of season, and out of place, as roses blooming in the midst of ice and snow. Nature does not venture her blossoms in such an atmosphere. Neither will a preacher, if common sense and a little grace are astir in his soul, when the atmosphere of religion around him is at zero, and the people spirit-

ually frost-bitten! "*Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord; and like a HAMMER that breaketh the rock in pieces?*" (Jer. xxiii. 29.) What business have flowers among fire, hammers, and sparks? The blacksmith that would decorate his forge and anvil and hammers with flowers, would become the laughing-stock of all the *smitheries* in town!

2. Those sweet blossoms of inspiration, culled by the wisdom of the *Holy One* from the bosom of Nature, beautify a discourse, however. I have listened to discourses that would have been much bettered by them, simply as a relief from pro-*sin*ness; even by a few of the flowers of poetry, or of secular oratory. Something is better than nothing—*weeds* in flower are preferable to entire barrenness! I have sighed, before now, for something of the kind, when listening to a dreary discourse.

"How were the earth of glory shorn
Were it of flowers bereft!"

The thought may apply to preaching. But, like other good things, it may be overdone, as in the case of that fine lady in an assembly, lately, who by *tawdriness* had vulgarized herself, and so she missed the respect she expected. A little good common sense had been better than all that.

"O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us
An' foolish notion."

3. We have listened to various sorts of preaching in our day; flashes of wit, and new-minted words and phrases, and other gay notions, with a little truth, to win a license and a hearing;

flaring with gaudy flowers, like farmer M——'s field, across the common yonder—"rich in gay weeds and blue-bottles," but scanty of grain; reminding one of a certain country prolific in useless flowers, but notorious for *barrenness*! When that farmer viewed his great field the other day, it was not the *flowers* which gave him satisfaction, I'll warrant you! He could have wished them "far enough," that the scanty crop might have some chance to grow and ripen for a favorable harvest. Tropes and flowers and other figures of rhetoric may please the fancy of some; but that which God looks for and values most in a sermon, is the soundness, pureness, and plentifulness of truth, and especially the *product* thereof in the hearts and lives of our hearers.

4. *War* and *flowers* are not companionable. Wreaths for the brow of the conqueror, but let him first become a conqueror! *Flowers* for the path of the hero, if the populace will it, which they never will until he has *proved* himself a hero! *Flowers*, if need be, for a sermon, but let it first prove itself worthy of them, in deeds of valor on the field! Besides, it is the *naked sword* that cuts; flowers would be an encumbrance. Not an *adorned*, but a crucified Christ, breaks the heart, and subdues sinners. St. Paul feared that "*the cross of Christ should be made of none effect*," if he preached the Gospel with the "*wisdom of words*," (1 Cor. i. 17.) Like John the Baptist, an effectual preacher must *burn* as well as *shine*! ay! and in this age of hardened sinners, he must *burn* more than *shine*; for they have had enough of *shining* preaching. It must *burn*—the coals of truth must *burn* to *burn* the conscience, and awaken a cry where the joke and the laugh were before! Hot work! *Sin-consuming* preaching is flower-con-

suming preaching, the world over? Flamma and Flora never could agree! But a preacher must be a *flame* to effect anything in our times. A godly person, greatly desiring to see a certain preacher, saw in a dream a *pillar of fire*, with this inscription: "Such is——," the man's name glowing on it. What had such a pillar to do with the flowers of poetry, etc.? His glowing soul would have consumed them! "Logic on fire"—that was his qualification—"lava-floods of eloquence!" that fired everything around him. Oh! for such a baptism of fire, my Lord and my God!

5. It is, as an excellent young divine of Scotland, who won an early crown—Rev. Mr. Hewitson—remarked, that "the *world* cannot stand before a ministry that is *strong in the grace of God*. It can stand *eloquence* in the preacher; it can stand before *philosophy*, and before *learning* in the preacher; but before *GRACE* it cannot stand. The sword of the Spirit in the hand of faith tells at every stroke! You cannot give faithful testimony to the world in vain; the effect will be 'unto death' in many; it will be 'unto life' in all who shall be saved!" Ah! but how often have I realized this, and seen it exemplified in others!

6. This is one reason, I suppose, why some ministers of humble talents are more successful frequently in the awakening and conversion of sinners than others possessed of higher endowments. Their trust, consequently, is more firmly fixed in God for success. Like Paul and his colleagues, under other circumstances, they have the sentence of death in themselves, that they should not trust in themselves, but in God which raiseth the dead. (2 Cor. i. 9.) Among my earliest lessons in the ministry was this, and it has often been of great service

to me—that an *iron* instrument, though blunt, if *red hot*, will pierce quicker and deeper, and with less force exerted, than one that is *sharper*, but *cold*! A polished mediocrity, as free from *blemish* as from energy of thought and grasp of intellect, will never set the world on fire. But if *God set it on fire*, it may set whole towns and cities in a blaze of revival.

7. I remember meeting the following sentiments in one of Mr. Jay's letters: That our *old divines*, and the *Methodist preachers* when they had just sprung up, had something to *rend* or *melt*, to *strike* and *stick*—to lead their hearers to think of again and again when alone, and to talk of again and again when in company. But what is the recommendation of many of the moderns? Oh! they glitter. They do—but, as Foster says, with *frost*!

CHAPTER XXII.

TO THE SAME—MORE ABOUT AN EMBELLISHED STYLE OF
PREACHING.



TRUE! Christ lectured on *lilies*! He expatiated on their beauty; but with what rapidity! Confidence in God, and trust in his providential care, was the design, and he reached it in an instant. “He gives us to see,” says Dr. Chalmers, “that taste may be combined with piety; and that the heart may be occupied with all that is serious in the contemplations of religion, and be at the same time alive to the charms and loveliness of nature.” I agree with you, we may see much of the wisdom of God in “these flowery illustrations” of the Bible; more, indeed, than in the piled arguments of most of the abstract preachers of the day. We may say of them as one said of a *flower* which he held in his hand, when invited to admire an elegant building: “There is more of God to be seen in that *flower*, than in the most beautiful edifices in the world.” In those fine allusions of Scripture, how clearly we may perceive the mind, the wisdom and goodness of God!

2. What vast and varied material man requires for the great productions of his hand! But when God would embellish nature with plants and herbs, and the whole brilliant race of *flowers*—flowers of every *shade* and tint—he calls but *one ele-*

ment into action, and the others *smile*, and the work is done: garden, field and valley, hill and meadow, and mountain side are enamelled with the choicest work of God. *Truth* is the grand element that originates and sustains those *flowers of inspiration* which you admire; and who does not? They are beautiful too, because God smiles upon them, and angels. *Truth*, appropriate truth, must call forth such flowers into a sermon; otherwise they will but resemble a *bouquet* in the hand of a corpse or an idiot! As much out of place in the hand of error or vanity, as flowers would be in the hand of Satan, or Scripture upon his lips!

3. I agree with you, also, that such figures are "an antidote to dulness." A poet hints that one cannot be melancholy where Flora reigns. It is so with a sermon, other things being equal; the heart must be dull indeed that is not cheered by the sweet and lively flowers from the gardens of the Bible. But, as a *guilty conscience* will introduce melancholy even where Flora reigns, it will do the same within the fragrant dominions of these flowers of Paradise; it clothes the soul in sable, though all around be fragrance and sunshine, and redolent of heaven. A most convincing argument this for pardon and purity, in order to enjoy the holiness and bliss of the upper Paradise!

4. As I observed yesterday, those blossoms of inspiration have not been neglected by your friend. But everything is beautiful in its season. More upon this shortly. I can humbly say with Origen of old, "I have plucked but a few flowers from these vast fields; not as many as the exuberance of those fields afford; but only such as by their odor I was led to select from the rest." Such have not appeared in my ser-

mons yet, for, to use an idea of the spouse in Solomon's Song, "*the time when the flowers appear on the earth*" has not come; nor "*the time for the singing of birds*;" nor has "*the voice of the turtle*" been heard in the land! There is too much of the spiritual winter remaining; it should be spring, but "*winter lingers in the lap of May!*" But a change is near; a breathing from a rarer world will soon pass through the religious atmosphere; and, when "*the Sun of Righteousness*" makes a nearer approach, and brings everything that loves the sun out of doors, as a poet somewhere hints, then flowers may appear upon my sermons, as flowers upon the earth in their season. The trees know when to trust their buds boldly in the open air, and so does the stranger!

The truth is, he is something of an enthusiast among such flowers! With regard to the Bible, he has too much resembled the boy who turned away from the beautiful garden of his father, straying through the distant fields in search of wild flowers, herbs, and plants; but he has quieted his conscience with the idea that he was only selecting the *graces* of his oratory from the same fields of nature from which his Heavenly Father has selected those which do now grace the tranquil gardens of Revelation! and, as Jesus said on a certain occasion, "*And other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring*;" and he was vain enough, the other day, to apply the thought to his own selections from the fields of nature! Other flowers there are, which do not grow in the pleasing gardens of inspiration; them also must I bring, saying of these, as of saints above and saints below,

" For all the servants of our King,
In earth and heaven, are one! "

Nature in her sweetest harmonies often seems as if whispering the same. When a *simple flower* has been transplanted beside some great Gospel truth, and sheds around it a sweet perfume, this glad heart repeats the same. The flower beautifies the truth, and truth dignifies it. It is thus your friend gathers his illustrations over hill and dale. The smiling cheek of benevolent nature, and the sweeter smiles of nature's God, often cheer him, and a shout of "Glory!" not unfrequently, from regaled and happy saints! These have been his rewards elsewhere—maybe here also in due season; and, to all this, the blissful hope of immortality! And can I be sad even in this season of dearth? Hallelujah!

These remarks, simple as they are, while they seem to ventilate my heart, and somehow give it a sense of larger room, may, perhaps, convince you that "nature" and your friend are on more intimate terms than this alarming style of preaching with which "the people have been greeted," would lead you to suppose; for, though acting from principle, I like to stand well with my *friends*; although, feeling as I do, I would preach as I do, were I to lose them all! I know many are disappointed; and had I come here for any other purpose than to bring sinners to God, I could hardly justify myself to myself. But you know how small a thing it is to be judged of man's judgment, when one can say, "*But he that judgeth is the Lord.*" (1 Cor. iv. 3-5.) Nature and revelation both offer materials to the Christian orator; if some of these are unfit for *war*, they are for *peace*, and do well to celebrate a peace or a victory. But some are designed for war, and for "*pushing the battle to the gates*," and *illustrations* of truth and righteousness, and coming judgment, *vivid* enough

to make men's souls look out of them! ay! and around them, as if seeking which way to "*flee from the wrath to come!*" and other illustrations or weapons, call them what you will, that fire the preacher with some such battle-cry as that of the Swiss warrior, "Make way for victory;" as he rushed, sword in hand, upon the serried files of the invaders of his country! Let the friends of Jesus take heart! "The flowers of oratory" after which they inquire, may come sooner than they expect the flowers of spring, when once our God giveth us the victory; and what if it does not occur until the depth of winter? Yet, even then,

" While earth wears a mantle of snow,
 These pinks are as fresh and as gay
As the fairest and sweetest that blow
 On the beautiful bosom of May!"

But, as before remarked, everything is beautiful in its season. Flowers may strew the path of victory, or form a wreath for the brow that conquers; but weapons of war, courageously wielded, make way for victory. I like the observation of an old minister, that, though the preachers of the word must not be *time-servers*, yet they may be *time-observers!* Amen!

CHAPTER XXIII.

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON PREACHING.



OUR observations are judicious. Great care should be taken that such things in the pulpit are not allowed to degenerate into mere amusement. An *old author*, I remember, illustrates different views of preaching by a man and child going into a field of grain together. The child falls in love with the blue and red weeds, but the man is for the solid grain. And thus it is with hearers: some are fond of curious figures, fine speculations, and flowery descriptions; while others, of more solid judgment and enlightened understanding, look for the spiritual and practical truths in Scripture. This is the corn his soul must live upon, while the others are attracted by gayeties and show! Still, he would not altogether condemn a certain kind of variety in preaching, to suit different tastes and temperaments, mingling some awakening, until they are prepared to receive more substantial things.

To your friend (who, by the way, is by no means your inferior in understanding, but who is partial to such methods of illustrating truth) I admitted my preferences, when the state of the work in the hearts of the people justified such a style. Once or twice a week, a lively and ornamental style in a ser-

mon relieves the mind, gives vivacity and elasticity to my hearers, and prepares them for sterner truth. A *flowery* or figurative style is by no means "discountenanced" in the Bible. The volume of inspiration, like the book of nature, is full of them. I gather from both. God is the Author of all. I gather my flowers from the Bible, and from nature, and plant them "*thus and thus*;" and sometimes in a sermon, during its delivery, where I never expected them to bloom; so making one fair garden of an hour's walk, spread out under the vivifying beams of the sun; where all but the *guilty* may regale their senses, and better the heart, and cheer the spirits. No artificials! none for mere display; all for the glory of God! I would, yes, I would have angels say of them, as a poet of other flowers—

" Not a flower

But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,
Of His unrivall'd pencil. He inspires
Their balmy odors, and imparts their hues,
And bathes their eyes in nectar, and includes,
In grains as countless as the sea-side sands,
The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth!"

As already remarked, this style of preaching has its uses. Not for "vanity and display," but for the benefit of the Church. It refreshes her members when weary on the field of toil and conflict—resting from the great fight for Christ and souls. A sermon, thus constructed, comes over them like the breath of morning flowers; when Jesus seems speaking in the behalf of his Church, as to the spouse in Solomon's Song, "*Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get*

me to the mountains of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense. Thou art all fair, my love ; there is no spot in thee. Awake, O north wind ; and come, thou south ; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon." And the Church invites, in the language of the spouse, "*Let my Beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits."* And then we have the song of triumph !

"This is my Beloved,
 His form is divine,
 His vestments shed odors around ;
 The locks on his head
 Are as grapes on the vine,
 When Autumn with plenty is crown'd.

"The roses of Sharon,
 The lilies that grow
 In the vales, on the banks of the stream,
 On his cheek in the beauty
 Of excellence blow—
 And his eyes are as quivers of beams.

"His voice, as the sound
 Of the dulcimer sweet,
 Is heard through the shadows of death ;
 The cedars of Lebanon
 Bow at his feet,
 The air is perfumed with his breath.

"His lips as a fountain
 Of righteousness flow,
 That waters the garden of grace,

From which their salvation
 The Gèntiles shall know
 And bask in the smiles of his face.

“Love sits in his eyelids,
 And scatters delight
 Through all the bright mansions on high:
 Their faces the cherubims
 Veil in his sight,
 And tremble with fulness of joy.

“He looks—and ten thousand
 Of angels rejoice,
 And myriads wait for his word;
 He speaks—and eternity,
 Filled with his voice,
 Reëchoes the praise of the Lord!”

After such a triumphal song they are ready for the prayer-meeting—or for the battle-field, where “*the slain of the Lord are many.*” The following week, when the LORD JESUS comes down in a similar manner, to refresh and “*confirm his inheritance, when it is weary,*” and “*his name yields the richest perfume,*” and music is not sweeter than his voice to the ears of his children; then how delightful to hear “*a new song,*” in the honor of him, whom the *spouse* calls, “*The chiefest among ten thousand; altogether lovely; this is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!*” Or, as another sweetly exclaimed, “*His name is music to my ear, honey to my taste, and a jubilee to my heart!*” And who would check the song, while they sing as if they would have heaven and earth listen!

" His vestments of righteousness
Who shall describe !
Its purity words would defile ;
The heav'ns from his presence
Fresh beauties imbibe ;
The earth is made rich by his smile.

" Such is my Beloved,
In excellence bright,
When pleased he looks down from above,
Like the morn when he breathes
From the chambers of light,
And comforts his people with love.

But when, arm'd with vengeance,
In terror he comes,
The nations rebellious to tame,
The reins of omnipotent
Power he assumes,
And rides in a chariot of flame.

" A two-edged sword
From his mouth issues forth,
Bright quivers of fire are his eyes ;
He speaks, and black tempests
Are seen in the north,
And storms from their caverns arise.

" Ten thousand destructions,
That wait on his word,
And ride on the wings of his breath,
Fly swift as the wind
At the nod of their Lord,
And deal out the arrows of death

“His cloud-bursting thunders
Their voices resound,
Through all the vast regions on high;
Till from the deep centre
Loud echoes rebound,
And meet the quick flame in the sky.

“The portals of heav'n
At his bidding obey,
And expand ere his banners appear;
Earth trembles beneath,
Till her mountains give way.
And Hell shakes her fetters with fear.

“When he treads on the clouds
As the dust of his feet,
And grasps the big storm in his hand,
What eye the fierce glance
Of his anger shall meet,
Or who in his presence shall stand?”

An acute theologian observed that “every man is born with his face toward hell, and his back on holiness.” The fact that the back is turned upon holiness and God, is evidenced almost as soon as “the mind’s first daylight” begins to dawn in the eye. Nor is it an easy matter to turn their faces in a right direction; but with such an hymn of praise, and such singing, it is no easy matter for the sinner to avoid “*looking unto Jesus.*” Thus it happens, that those who harden under prose, and fly a sermon, melt, and are held under arrest, by such melodious sounds of many voices. And the children of God are fired with zeal to renew the conflict for Christ and perishing sinners; like the nobles of “*olden time,*” who

touched their swords when hearing "the Gospels" read, signifying their determination to fight and die in the defence of the truth!

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The "evils" you speak of are serious. We prevent them much as possible. Men are constantly abusing the good things of Providence, yet are they not withdrawn. If sinners suck poison out of the sweet flower of God's mercy, is it to be wondered at if they "suck amusement" out of my "flowers of speech"? If they pluck *death* from "*the tree of life*" in the Gospel, by *presuming* upon divine forbearance and long-suffering, marvel not if they gather *mirth* from the *blossoms* on my sermon! This is one reason why I sometimes denude my sermons of all such things, and let the naked sword of truth, and burning words, bring them to their senses.

Had you seen the movements of a trio of winged insects the other day—a butterfly, a wasp, and a bee! The butterfly, full of life and gayety, dropping at will upon every fragrant blossom; "much ado about nothing"—flitting about—enjoyment alone the business of the sunny hour, careless of the future. Along came a spy wasp, serious in aspect, though slender-waisted as any belle or dandy, and with a touch-me-not air, and asserting its liberty to salute every blossom that opened its bosom to the sun. Next came a honey-bee, singing its own sweet song, blithe as the morning, cheerful as the sunshine, hiding itself in a flower, busy all the while, singing its gratitude on leaving it for another. And other bees arrived, intent upon honey as the first; and other butterflies, and wasps, and flies of various orders, in mazy dance and hum overhead, recalling those lines culled from Virgil in our younger years:

“About the boughs the airy nations flew
 Thick as the humming bees that hunt the golden dew
 In summer heat, on tops of lilies feed,
 And creep within the bells, to suck the balmy seed!”

Ay! and reminding the poor preacher of the varied characters which crowd his preaching-place, and their varied purposes;—and of Virgil again, whose lines I did not finish—who, like myself, sometimes withdrew his attention from flies and wasps and butterflies—“airy nations,” as he called them—and regaled his eyes upon the busy bee, and other “laboring youth” of younger hives, returning home laden with the rifled sweets of many a fragrant herb and flower—thus:

“Plains, meads, and orchards all the day he flies;
 The gleans of yellow thyme distend his thighs;
 He spoils the saffron flow'rs, he sips the blues
 Of violets, wilding blooms, and willow dews;
 And late at night, with weary pinions come
 The lab'ring youth, and heavy laden, home!”

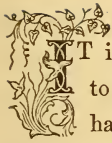
Solomon sent the sluggard to learn wisdom of the ant; and may not we learn wisdom of the butterfly, the wasp, and the bee? God withholds not the flowers in their season, though butterflies and wasps make but poor use of them. *Bees* must have flowers, in order to make honey; and flowers are prepared for them by providence. Flowers, therefore, are made to bloom on the lap of nature, even though wasps resort to them for poison, and butterflies for amusement. Look into the matter, and, as in a glass, you may see a reason for God's method, both with saint and sinner, as regards the *promises*, and for my method with respect to my *illustrations*.

The butterfly, flitting from flower to weed, and from weed to flower, indifferently, but soon to perish in the winter storms, resembles some of my hearers. The wasp, startling the honey-bee out of its line, sipping the honey-dew from every blossom, and changing it into poison quicker than the process adopted by the bee, illustrates another class of hearers. The bee, busy for the hive, burying itself in fragrance and bloom, intent upon the great business of life, to provide for the wants of winter and for its young, illustrate *old believers*, and young Christians, and mourners in Zion. It gladdens my heart wonderfully, if these take to the "flowers" which have attracted your notice. It was said of *One*, in the Scriptures, "*Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know how to refuse the evil and know the good.*" (Is. vii. 15.) It is so with these, sir, for whom the Lord God provideth. Every sunny hour, and every opening flower, in Scripture or sermon, these *holy honey-bees* improve to their advantage;—go where they will, they alight on them—blossoms of Paradise, filled with the nectar of angelic delight—singing, they go from blossom to blossom; and if you could but see and hear them in their only little *hives*, the *class meetings*, you would learn more than I have been able to tell you!

Those skeptical wasps—I am not hopeless of them yet. You are better acquainted with the doings in their hives than I am, I fancy. Nor am I hopeless of those pretty *unideal* nothings, as Johnson called them—vying with the colors of the rainbow, as they come floating in, and then out again. "*Is there anything too hard for God?*" *One idea*, planted in those life-long hearts by the Holy Spirit, will make a wonderful change in all that starch and frippery! Amen.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TO — : AN ANGRY HEARER.



IT is not my habit to reply to every hearer who chooses to fling back his offence. "Let an angry man always have the quarrel to himself," was the motto of one who was never known to quarrel with any one, no matter what the provocation. It might be good at the present time; still I hope a few plain words may not be amiss. That you have cause both for sorrow and repentance, is plain enough; but none for *anger*, that I can see, unless it be excited against your easily besetting sin. Exercise self-control. Keep cool. It was once remarked of one that he was of so irritable a temper that he was ready to fight with his own image in the looking-glass. He was an object of pity, poor man, doubtless! Much more should such keep cool as are angry at their own image reflected in the glass of the Gospel! I never read that the man just mentioned tried to pick a quarrel with him who suspended the mirror. That would have been very foolish, for it was hung up there for others to see their image in it as well as the ill-featured and ill-tempered man. He knew that neither the upholsterer nor the mirror was to blame for his own unseemly appearance! I wish I could say the same of

yourself! The man in question, most likely, wished that looking-glasses had never been invented (which, by the way, are very ancient articles, of one material or other), or that there were no such things in existence. But what mattered, seeing his neighbors could behold him without a glass?

It is rather remarkable that one who has been so severe against the image of God in his dear children—rather those imperfections which, alas! are too many, but some of which seem inseparable from poor humanity, but when mirrored in your glass, were only found fault with — you should cease offering fight to their imperfect image, to fight with your own; ay! and with him also that had the temerity to hold up so faithful a mirror. Had the glass been painted, or veiled, or so adorned with the flowers of oratory, matters had been different. Admiration feasting on flowers, the dimly outlined figure might have escaped even your own recognition. My namesake among the apostles, likened the “*hearer of the word, and not a doer,*” “*unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself.*” They neither painted, nor veiled, nor obscured with flowers the glass of the preached word, in those days. “*He beholdeth himself.*” Not somebody else, or some doubtful wight or other, but “*himself!*” But it was then, as now, in too many instances—he “*goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.*” (James i. 23–24.) Not so with yourself! You went your way, and memory in company. To forget your own looks, as you appeared in the mirror of that sermon, you found an impossibility. There is hope of you, I think; unless you quite destroy repenting grace by ill-humor. Be this as it may, there is

a *fact* which hangs in your memory like the bell in yonder belfry; and though you may succeed to silence it, it is still there, ready to sound a fearful *knell* one of these days, when set in motion by the hand of Providence, or the Holy Spirit, or by death.


Had the preacher been less faithful, and more intent in decorating his discourse with the flowers of imagination, than in presenting a naked mirror, careless whether it had any frame at all; he might have lessened your "trouble" and curses, but at the risk of the curse of God. Is it not written, "*Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully*"? (Jer. xlviii. 10.) *Charity* begins at home, in this sort of trouble. Better get you into trouble in your own conscience, that you might be forgiven of the Lord, than get myself into trouble with the Lord. Had you been prudent and quiet, and carried your case in a state of sorrowing repentance to the Lord, all might have been forgiven. Such exposures are no part of my policy. They *injure* the public taste, when personal. Pulpit faithfulness may accomplish all that God intends, without dragging out such things thus before a congregation. When Nathan said to David, "*Thou art the man,*" it was done in private, and had the desired effect; and God, a deeply offended God, was satisfied.

I am certain, had you been quiet, and humbled yourself before the Lord, there the matter might have rested: "*Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*" (Rom. viii. 33, 34.) He who intercedes for a repenting sinner can never

turn round, in the same breath, and *accuse* and *condemn!* Having Christ on your side, all would have been well; but to set an uncharitable and unforgiving public against yourself, was folly, if not madness.

CHAPTER XXV.

TO ANOTHER—A QUIET EXPLANATION ; OR, FACTS ABOUT
PREACHING.

NCE on a time, a godly preacher observed, "To preach *simply*, is not to preach rudely, unlearnedly, nor confusedly ; but to preach plainly, perspicuously, that the *simplest* may understand what is taught, as if he heard his own name." The *rub* was there ! He felt just as one did in a certain assembly, when he cried to the preacher, in the bitterness of his soul, "Name me !" There is hope of such men. They are far from being the worst or most hopeless specimens of society.

Some of our hearers often remind me of *sieves* dipped into a river, which hold the water no longer than they are in the river : they remember the most stirring truth no longer than they are immersed, so to speak, in the *sounds* of the sanctuary ! I have little hope of such hearers. More hope, I confess, of such as fret or mock or wonder. A few breaths go forth from the preacher, and a few sounds reach the hearer, and there the matter ends, usually, with the *former*. Not so with the *latter* ! Trouble just begins then. He spoke truly who said, "The A B C of a Christian is to learn the art of hearing." Jesus thought as much when he said, "*Take heed how ye hear.*" (Luke viii. 18.) Such as are under notice have learned the

A B C in bad humor, like some ill-conditioned boys at school! But for all that, they may soon be able to

“read their title clear
To mansions in the skies.”

It is very seldom I tell people from the pulpit things which they have never before heard or known or thought of in theology. Seldom do any of them remark, “I never heard of that before;” but the cases are frequent when they tell me how distinctly their particular sins were described! It so happens, in placing doctrines which they already believe in some striking positions and under some new or stronger light, that the sins of individuals are brought into light also, that “*sin might appear sin, working death; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful*” (Rom. vii. 13); God by this means startling the conscience into an acknowledgment of that one passage of Scripture, at least, “*Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.*” Ah! my friend, many, when preaching the word, realize this to their sorrow and humiliation, as well as some who are hearing the same! Like John Bunyan, who tells us, in his “Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners,” that sometimes when preaching, like Samson, he bowed himself with all his might to condemn sin and transgression, even when horribly assured by the devil, in some cruel suggestion, that he was preaching against himself!

It is not unlikely in his “*Thou art the man*” style of preaching sounded odd, at first, to one accustomed so long to the *third person* style of address—that *anybody*, or *everybody*, or *nobody* method. This sort of *generalizing* has never seemed to effect much in my efforts. The direct stroke at the individual con-

science has usually done the work. Whether armed with terror or winged with love, the response has followed often, and in a most decided manner. But it has caused me both joy and sorrow; joy, when—like the lightning, the thunder, and the storm that drove Noah and his family into the ark—it has led some poor sinner to “*flee from the wrath to come,*” and enter the Ark of safety, Jesus Christ our Lord; sorrow, when—like the same storm that drove Noah and his household into the ark, but swept a careless world away—sinners, by such preaching, have been swept away from me, leaving me empty pews in abundance the following night. Then, how my soul has humbled itself, and cried to God, and mourned in secret places. And with what joy have I seen them return again, eager, penitent listeners to the word! and that word soft and mild now, and gentle as the tones that greeted the dove of the deluge, when poising with weary wing over the ark, being now made willing to return! Ay! and comforting and assuring, like the bow of promise after the horrors of that storm of storms! Ay, *tender*, like the sweet tones of Jesus, maybe, when he said to the troubled and heavy laden, “*Come unto me, and I will give you rest. I will refresh you; and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.*” Such a style would have been all but lost upon those sinners before they had been *hewn* by the word. It was with sinners somewhat as with Elijah on Horeb—the great wind that “*rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord,*” and the *earthquake* that set the mountains around a-trembling and upheaving, and the cloud-rending and consuming *fire* prepared the prophet to hear the “still small voice” with attentive and reverent awe, and gratitude and love.

That blow at an individual conscience, the other night, fell upon a number of others ; and that single fragment hurled in another direction, splintered like a shell bursting in a crowd. You saw the effects. "*He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*" Directness is attained by the single aim, in preaching, as in fowling. The word comes with marvellous power thus, when accompanied by the Holy Spirit. The sinner is made to exclaim, "It is *me* he means, and nobody else." And he feels, just as your friend felt, that "the eye of the preacher" is fixed on him alone ! The art of causing the *eyes* of a portrait to be looking at a spectator, no matter how he may change his position, and, if there were *twenty* persons in the room, each would receive a similar impression, is not confined to the *limner* alone, as the Spirit of God, aided by conscience, exhibits a similar phenomenon, frequently, in a living preacher, when preaching "*the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.*" A truth which might seem and was intended for *general application*, I have known to *bend* in a particular direction, and strike a sinner as if directly aimed at him ! like as a shaft of lightning, direct from the bosom of the thunder-cloud, *curves* from the straight line in which it was launched, without any visible cause, and strikes and fires a building quite on an angle. Some *sinner*s, like certain bulky substances in a thunder-storm, are peculiarly adapted to attract the lightnings of truth !

It might be prudent to whisper this truth in his ear, from me, that the notion that some *tattler* had been busy with the ear of the preacher, is but a device of *Satan*, to lessen the effect, and to *fret* him against his neighbors ; not unfrequently does the *archfiend* make capital thus ! But he never whispers in the

ear of the irritated sinner, "*The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*" (Prov. xv. 3.)

Let him be assured, it was only another effort of "*the eternal Spirit*" to remove from his eyes that veil of darkness held there by "*the god of this world.*" (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.) That was a keen remark of one, "Every *sin* draws hell at its very heels;" ay, and the *truth*, too, that would awaken and save. It was only yesterday that a *cloud* of a handbreadth soon spread over all the sky. Such a cloud has overspread the soul of your friend; it may be but the forerunner of a heavy and disastrous gale, illustrative of my text last Sabbath night: "*Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind; it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. The anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.*" (Jer. xxiii. 10, 20.) The wiser way would be to "*consider it perfectly,*" now, when consideration will be of some avail. *Un-availing* regret is often very bitter. "Let go things less necessary, and mind the main," said one a long time ago, adding, "the task is long, the *time* short; opportunities are headlong, and must be quickly caught, as the *echo* catches the *voice*: there is no use of *after-wit.*" The advice that was good then is good now, seeing the clouds still keep their station; judgment lingers, and divine mercy hovers round!

Atterbury asserted that "the worst company in the world is better than a reproving conscience." I don't know about that; for such a conscience may goad a sinner to fly to Christ for deliverance from it. In its relation to *happiness*, I suppose, he was right. But not a few in this city consider the weak-

est, leanest, and most drivelling preaching preferable to that which awakens the *conscience*, and sets it to the execution of its heaven-appointed office! Ah! sirs, all you who hear me this day, take notice—a *reproving sermon*, like a *reproving conscience*, may effect an eternal good for the reprovèd.

Conscience is a law in the soul, and overrules certain objections and skeptical notions with great force and authority. How often it has resolved itself into *judge*, *jury*, and *executioner*, some of you know very well by experience. It has the *ability* to discern the nature of an action, the *authority* to threaten, accuse, and sentence, and the *power* to carry it into execution.

The Psalmist says: “*In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them.*” (Ps. lxxv. 8.) Awful passage! He of whom we have been speaking has been sipping from that cup; and it has been at the lips of some of you now present. The dregs are reserved for eternity. Alas! alas! who can hope, after all that God has declared upon the subject, of ever reaching the bottom of that cup? It is called, in Rev. xiv. 10, “*The cup of his indignation;*” and its chief ingredient, “*the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation.*” Oh! that little word “*is,*” “*is poured out,*” indicates an *eternal now!* No wonder, then, that it is stated in the same terrible text, “*And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.*” Oh! may God save both preacher and hearer from a portion so terrible.

But, says the Psalmist, “*There is mercy with thee, that thou*


mayest be feared"—not hated, but "*feared.*" In hell, "hate and malice inextinguishable" prevail, because there is no hope of mercy. Here sinners may hope for mercy; therefore they fear without hate, and *repent* without *malice*, and soon learn to *love* him who first loved them!

But you are waiting for the text. Another remark before you hear it, for it is a solemn one: It was the saying of one now with God, that when the Lord sends *cries* unto a people for their unbelief and wickedness, as he sent *Jonah* to cry against *Nineveh*, that if they do not repent, like Nineveh, while such cries continue among them, then God himself will rise up against them! Alas! if this is the last cry in the ears of some, how ought I to preach, and how ought you to hear and pray! May I preach, and you hear, as for eternity. Text: Job xxxvi. 18.*

* The sermon may yet be published, but the time is not yet.

CHAPTER XXVI.

TO A WORDY DOUBTER—PROLIXITY.

T is questionable whether your "*friend*" needs your aid! He is capable of defending his own cause, so far, perhaps, as it is possible for such principles to be defended; and in a gentlemanly spirit, too, which is pleasing to find in one professing such opinions. But mercy on us, sir! have mercy upon one's patience, and learn to express your ideas in fewer words! This is an age of *retrenchment*, and I see no reason why verbosity should be exempted. Besides, suffer not your sentences to be so insufferably long! That was a wise remark of Old Humphrey, that "for the *arrow* intended to go right home, straight to the mark, there is nothing like taking a *single aim!*" This is what a friend of his called "using a *rifle barrel*, instead of a *scattering blunderbuss!*" Some sentences are something like the latter—they scatter in every direction, and miss more than they hit! I like a single, unencumbered sentence, even from an opponent, because one knows then what he would be at, as well as confident he knows the same! *Packing a sentence* is like an archer letting off half a dozen arrows at once from the same string, intended for the same object—pretty sure to embarrass each other on the way rather than hit the mark!

Mend your sentences, then, or end them! Try to see clearly, and then you are likely to write clearly, and to the point. That man who got lost on the *moors* the other day in a fog, performed various evolutions and comical circles most sincerely, without nearing his true point a jot—wearying himself in vain to find it, and others to find him! Had the atmosphere been clear, he could have gone straight to the outlet; or if altogether *bewildered* himself, his whereabouts could have been seen by others! Pray to God, friend, that your understanding may revolve in a clearer atmosphere! The *devil's moors*, like the Derbyshire, are notorious for fogs! You will see clearer, and write better, when clear off from those unappropriated tracks of speculation; or if appropriated, it is by *Satan*, and his "*hangers-on*," who love darkness rather than light; poor *skeptics* and daring *infidels*, volunteers for hell, without so much of bounty money as the Scotchman's "*baubee*," fighting their way thitherward through mere love of it!

While upon this subject—for, I assure you, I feel deeply interested, so much time have I wasted in deciphering ideas out of muddled composition—you will excuse me for referring to the remarks of one regarding modern German prose writers. He said every German regards a *sentence* in the light of a package, and a package not for the mail-coach, but for the wagon, into which his privilege is to crowd as much as he possibly can! Having framed his sentence, therefore, he next proceeds to *pack* it, which is effected partly by unwieldy tails and codicils, but chiefly by enormous parenthetical involutions. And should his sentence extend into a proposition, all qualifications, limitations, exceptions, and illustrations are stuffed and

violently rammed into it. That all this equipage of accessories is not so arranged as to assist its own orderly development, no more occurs to a German as a fault, than that in a package of shawls or of carpets the colors and patterns are not fully displayed. To him it is sufficient they are there! He instanced a Mr. Kant, who succeeded in "packing up" a sentence which covered three closely printed octavo pages!—who seemed to finish with a pause to draw breath, with the air of one who looks back upon some brilliant and meritorious performance!

Now all this is doubtless somewhat overdrawn, for I have read German writers, both in prose and poetry, the very reverse of this. In the balance and structure of their sentences and modifications of their periods they would compare favorably with our best English writers—unless their translators corrected their encumbrances, as we sometimes say "the tailor makes the man." Be advised, clip your sentences into two or three, at least, so as to allow a few more breathing points. Above all, let them not be "dimly writ, nor difficult to spell," nor force one to murmur with Milton,

"And what have been thy answers? what but dark,
Ambiguous, and with doubtful sense deluding!"

* * * * *

Keep cool, sir! Remember, as I sometimes say to my opponents, "It is the cold steel that cuts!" In such matters we must think and let think, both as to sentiment and style, and leave fighting to things beneath us. I have been taught to suspect that those who are ready to fight for their religion have little religion to fight for! Beware of such

flings, for words and sentences so hurled are as ungraceful and undesirable as head-endangering stones or sticks! Cowper, speaking of a belligerent character, says :

“I saw him fling a stone, as if he meant
At once his murder and his monument!”

The shrewd observations of a sensible man are worthy your consideration at the present time : To quarrel, he said, was the easiest, commonest, and foolishest thing in the world, whether by man, woman, or child ; no matter what the provocation may be, there is no necessity, and no benefit to be gained by it ; and yet, strange to say, theologians quarrel, politicians quarrel, physicians and lawyers quarrel, the Church quarrels ; nations, tribes, and states quarrel ; men, women, and children quarrel ; dogs, cats, birds, and beasts quarrel about all manner of things, and on all manner of occasions. He admitted that out of these evil things some redeeming results may come, and produce their grain of wheat to a bushel of chaff ; and made a liberal offer withal, that if anybody ever discovered a good thing come out of a quarrel, if he would give him the length, breadth, and quality of it, he would insure him a patent for the same, and credit to boot of having seen farther into a millstone than any chap that ever looked into daylight east of the Hudson ! I am giving you the man’s own language !

Some things, he added, look well in theory, but will not answer at all in practice ; but neither the theory nor the practice of quarrelling is good. If people will not listen to reason, they will not hearken patiently to abuse. You may *lead*, but you cannot drive men. Men cannot believe upon compulsion ; nor can you reach the human mind by force of arms.

“ Convince a man against his will,
And he's of the same opinion still.”

You have a right to your opinion, and so have others. When men quarrel about *politics*, they are denying the first principle of liberty—freedom of thought, without which there is nothing in politics worth a groat! You have a right to convince, if you can; exercise that right, but don't quarrel. A man has a right to stand by his *religious faith*—a right to insist upon it, and to present it respectfully on all proper occasions to the consideration of others, but he has no right to quarrel! Let my excited friend ponder these remarks—they will do him good.

* * * * *

Pardon my obtuseness! I am tempted into couplets; but, have you never been tempted to say of some communications, as Montgomery did of books?—

“ But books there are with nothing fraught,
Ten thousand words, and ne'er a thought! ”

Preserve temper, and do not get out of patience either with my “superstition” or “want of discernment.” I am persuaded you can produce something more worthy of yourself, to say nothing of your cause, or of my reply. The unamiable mood betrayed in your last is excused. But now this feathery style,—and so much of it!—in behalf of your talents and education, I protest. I have no pleasure in teasing you, but wish to excite you to what you are evidently capable of—a manly style, at least. If the cause you have espoused is not worthy of it, say so, and give the matter up. What is worth doing at all, is worth doing well. I am not pleading for sublimity of style, nor even elegance, but for perspicuity and seriousness and candor, and some touches of that *genius* which I know

you possess; even a little humor will not be taken amiss, and maintain a kind spirit. Let us not bully each other; yet, knock my cause down with solid argument, if you can! Remember, it tires the arm sooner to throw *feathers* than substances of reasonable weight, because it is such a temptation to an undue exercise of strength when a feather is to be projected to a great distance. This is really good advice! Out with some full-grown manly ideas, in good, stout, robust old English. If the system you have espoused is incapable of supplying you with such ideas, abandon it for a better.

* * * * * * *

My friend is improving! A question just here: Has it ever happened, when ascending a stair in the dark, that, in raising your foot for another step where none was, because you had arrived at the top sooner than you expected, you made a surprise step, and came down with a decided thwack of your foot upon the floor from which you had the previous moment lifted it? Or, when descending, maybe, you reached the hall below by one step sooner than you calculated, and, stepping for that step, your foot and the floor met somewhat disagreeably? Well, I am mistaken if you have felt nothing of this in your last effort. Infidelity has a short staircase leading to nothing, and that does not suit an intellect like yours. It is a system of *negatives*, and all its steps are such, affirming nothing, and denying everything, and soon conducts the mind to the end of everything! No ingenious mind can be brought without a shock to such a conclusion!

Again, I must suggest, come to the point at once; speak out all that is in your heart—the *notions* of your “Society,” whatever they are, though as wicked as Cain and foul as

Paine. If low, you need not surely climb so to reach them, like Shakspeare's hero, who

“Climb'd o'er the house to unlock the little gate!”

Infidelity, as a scheme of opposition to the Bible and revealed religion, is necessarily low, and originates *low thoughts*, and these, like small thoughts, even in a good cause, are never bettered by an attempt at splendor of language. To attempt it in behalf of such thoughts as your scheme inspires is mere bombast; it is like General Tom Thumb acting the monarch or wielding the sword of a Sir William Wallace! or like the *dwarf* in the Irishman's bull, who was so *tall* he had to climb a ladder to shave himself!

* * * * *

Not at all! I meant *you* no disrespect, but your principles rather. Your *talents*, as well as those of your friend, whose cause you have espoused, are fitted for nobler themes than infidelity can furnish them. Indeed, I see not how either of you can cling to such principles, unless bound down to them by some wicked habits, and despair of happiness in another world.

Infidelity affords but a meagre field for the human intellect. What is there in it to stimulate a worthy zeal, to expand the mind, or warm the heart? It is like “*the vineyard of the slothful*,” and “*the field of a man void of understanding*,” celebrated by Solomon; “*thorns and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall was broken down.*” It is full of impediments, without good fruit, but *thorns* in plenty to pierce the laborer therein with many sorrows, and *nettles*, too, to sting him into evil humors, and often into desperation!

How fearfully true the remark of one, that infidelity arms the *understanding* against the dictates of Revelation, and the *passions* against the purity and self-denial of the divine requirements, and the *will* against “*all that is called God, and worshipped;*” it arms every *member* as an instrument of unrighteousness, and precipitates the *whole man* into the battle-field occupied by the hostile forces of good and evil. Ah! these are truthful observations! How often I have seen them verified in my sojourns in different countries!

* * * * * *

But are you not aware that such virtues as you mention are inculcated in a yet higher degree in the Gospel? Why retreat into infidelity to discover or enjoy them? Mr. Wesley was conversing one day regarding the American Indians with a lady, who earnestly inquired, “Do you mean by Christianity, then, temperance, justice, and veracity?” Mr. W. replied: “What do you apprehend more valuable than *good sense, good nature, and good manners?* But all these are contained in the highest degree in what I mean by Christianity. *Good sense* (so called) is but a poor, dim shadow of what Christians call *faith*. *Good nature* is only a faint resemblance of Christian charity. *Good manners*, if of the most finished kind that nature assisted by art can attain to, is but a dead picture of that holiness of conversation which is the image of God visibly expressed. All these put together by the art of God, I call Christianity!” Here, sir, you have an epitome of the religion of Jesus Christ! Why then plunge into the murky shades of infidelity in search of virtues (if that be really your object), which, to say the least, you can find in much higher perfection in the Christian system? Tell me, have you really

found such virtues exhibited among infidels? Are they not, wherever found, among the coarsest and most unamiable in the community? Can you deny it? What is there in your system to make them otherwise? With your own judgment I am content to leave the matter.

With regard to what is personal, I trust the lesson has been profitable, and may yet be more so. He spoke well who said, "He that will learn of none but himself, is sure to have a fool his master." However, if you look into the matter more closely, you may perceive that much of that abruptness in my manner of speaking and writing on some occasions, and which has struck you as "dogmatical," arises simply from the habit of going directly to the point, without disguise, and without circumlocution. There is, perhaps, a natural aptitude for it. In my boyhood excursions, the point of the compass once settled, or some distant landmark in view, hedges, ditches, or stone walls were no obstacles; with eye on the mark, and a fence-spurning foot, and "taking breath out of companions, and risking neck or limb, the goal was won!" Now, as you seem versed in the science of *etymology*, you may be in that of *olympics* also, and thus trace the derivation of the direct precipitancy in question.

"The child is father of the man,"

saith the poet—ay, and the boy also—in extemporizing as well as excursionizing!

This may appear but a trifling apology for "so serious a fault;" but it is the best I have to offer, unless I add this one fact, that when an *idea* is clearly perceived in the mind, or a *truth*, the necessity for many words is greatly lessened. Per-

haps, also, you might be willing to allow me the benefit of that neat observation in "The Tatler," that where a man has no design but to speak the truth, he may say a great deal in a very narrow compass! "A sentence," you remark, "may be both long and clear." To be sure it may!—as a *sunbeam*, though it reach from heaven to earth! Only let it be clear of a fog of words, and those which follow it as well! It is that "suffocating boundlessness in method of expression," as one names it, and which some call eloquence in speaking, or fine writing, which I enjoin upon myself to avoid, and my correspondents also. However, let all this pass. We have more serious matters before us. Let us express ourselves so as not only to be understood, but that we cannot be misunderstood. And if on occasions this is a perfection too high for either of us, let us aim at it!

The question, "What is truth?" is appropriate enough from one who has withdrawn "all confidence from the Bible;" that abandoned, the question must force itself upon the mind with fearful significancy. "The Bible," says Locke, "is all pure, all sincere; *nothing too much, nothing wanting.*" Every truth necessary for man to know is there. Discard that book, and what have we left? Robinson, a fine intellect of the last century, justly remarks, and ponder his testimony: "The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain a system of human nature, the grandest, the most extensive and complete, that ever was divulged to mankind since the foundation of nature." And, I would add, there is no want in human nature better provided for than that after which you inquire—
TRUTH!

Rousseau, with whom some of your brethren have been "so

charmed"—with the fascination of his *style*, I suppose, and *not his character*—even Rousseau was compelled to pay this tribute to the Bible, which you must remember, if you have read his works: "I must confess to you that the majesty of the Scriptures astonishes me, and the holiness of the Evangelists speaks to my heart, and has such strong and striking characters of *truth*, and is moreover so perfectly inimitable, that if it had been the invention of men, the inventors would have been the greatest of heroes." Should remarks such as these, even from such a source, lead you to the Bible in search of what you inquire after, I shall rejoice! Others are waiting for replies—another apology for *abruptness*!

CHAPTER XXVII.

TO THE SAME—CLOSELY PRESSED.



IT never surprises me to find a man groping in vain after *truth*, who has refused to believe the testimony of *God's word*! Notwithstanding all you have said against the Bible, the *wants*, the *inquiries*, the *yearnings* of your nature are more fully met in that book, than in any other book or system our world has to offer. The *virtues* enjoined there are the best for soul and body; and the *vices* forbidden there are injurious to both. *Facts* these, to which all men can bear witness more or less. The whole medical faculty, as with one voice, testify to them; and so do the newspapers of the day—those heralds through which we learn how God is governing the world.

What are we to say to these facts? What are we to learn? What inference draw from them? This: that the Creator of *man* is the *Author* of the Bible! If the virtues enjoined in the Scriptures, and the vices prohibited, produced the contrary effects upon men, I confess it would greatly stumble me in coming to such a conclusion. And I appeal to yourself whether it would not be one of your strongest arguments against the book? But so long as the *well-being* of mind and body, *with length of days*, are promoted by the observance of such Bible

injunctions and prohibitions—and the *ill-being* of both, with abridgment of life, the effect of the non-observance of them—you must admit I have a strong argument in favor of the book!

Another, though lesser argument, is worthy your attention. The enemies of the Bible are those who practise the *vices* it condemns; and the *friends* of it, those who practise the *virtues* it enjoins. The *bad* hate it; the *good* love it. To what conclusion should this lead us?

Time forbids me to enlarge. Death-bed testimonies are often convincing. Who ever heard a dying sinner regret that he had not lived a more *vicious* life? or that the Bible and religion were not opposed with more energy and success?—unless, to use the sad remark of one, God was about to suffer him to drop into the fiery lake, with a senseless heart and a seared conscience, leaning upon a lie! But how is it with the godly on such occasions? Who ever heard any of these regret, in their dying moments, their faithfulness to God? or wish that they had been less religiously disposed? less devoted to God? less attached to the Bible? less zealous for the advancement of its truth? less in prayer and at the ordinances of God's house, through life? Not one! On the contrary, they usually regret that they were not more *faithful* in all these particulars. The testimony of one now in eternity is worthy of being repeated here: "Piety is no matter for repentance. Does a child of God speak against sin and sinners, and for a sober and holy life? He will do so to the last! Death, judgment, and a nearer approach to eternity shall not change his mind, but *confirm it.*" Ah! sir, how many of those who speak against religion and Christians, when in health,

ask their prayers and pine for their hopes and comforts in death!

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Let us keep temper, friend! Bad humor hurts digestion: true, doubtless, in *didactics* as in *dietetics*! For my part, I have often proved the wisdom of the old Asiatic: "Measure every man with his own measure—that is, do not expect or require from him more than is in him." I can easily make allowance for you. Nevertheless, for your own sake examine the subject calmly, with less of prejudice, and be not over anxious for *victory*.

Indifference to death! A mere bravado, more likely, or a play upon words, or a scintillation of the fancy!

" So like the borealis race,
Which fit ere you can mark the place! "

fitting over the surface of the soul in vast uncertainties, or playing over the heart, like cold moonbeams over a snow-drift, warming nothing, melting nothing! It is a sorry plea to make the soul glad by an imposition both upon memory, conscience, reason, and judgment; for all these have had something to say upon this subject in bygone days, and they shall again, depend upon it! Job spoke of "*a land of darkness and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness*" to the buried dead. The *heart* may be but the *tomb* of buried principles, and of dead hopes and fears, which are to have a resurrection by and by! Athwart the gloom of that heart—*thine*, I mean—there may, perchance, stray a *beam* of light, dispersing itself like a ray through some chink in a *sepulchre*, "darting uncertain brightness for a moment, faint and precari-

ous," where "*the light is as darkness*," leaving the mind oscillating like a pendulum between *indifference* and *suspense*, until some moving shadow in the sepulchral gloom determines it unto *unquietness*.

There have been *shadows* passing through your heart lately, or I am mistaken—

"Shadows that will not vanish
Though you wave them to depart"—

unquiet, disowned *principles* and *fears*—ambassadors from heaven at the court of your conscience, and the representatives of the truth of the religion of Jesus Christ in years gone by, but slain by infidelity, but are now risen from the dead like the "*two witnesses*" in Rev. xi. 3-13, or like unto the dead which rose from the dead after our Lord's resurrection and appeared unto many—looking at you as they did at Jerusalem, when they turned their rayless eyes, covered with the frosts of death, upon a city devoted to destruction!

"Oh! a *haunted heart* is a weight to bear!"

Indifference to death! more than doubtful, except when under the influence of an *exhilaration* not natural to your habitual state of mind. I believe with one who understood well what he said, that *death* can never be *indifferent* till man is assured—which none was ever yet—that, with his breath, his being passes into nothing; that it matters little, whether his hopes and fears steer by the chart and compass of a formal creed, or drift along the shoreless sea of faithless conjecture, a *possible eternity* can never be *indifferent*; that *the idea of extinction is not terrible, simply because man cannot form such an idea at all!* Let a man, he continued, try as long as he will—

let him negative every conceived and conceivable form of future existence, he is as far as ever from having exhausted the infinitude of possibility—imagination will continually produce the line of consciousness through limitless darkness; adding, many are the devices of *fancy* to relieve the soul from the dead weight of *unideal nothing!*

Allow a question: Are you entirely unfamiliar in the privacy of your own thoughts with those youthful moanings of Henry Kirke White, “communing lonely with his sinking soul,” looking death in the face the while, and, in the solemn midnight hour, feeling that his sickness was unto death?—the poet, you are aware, died young:

“ Yes, I do feel my soul recoil within me,
 As I contemplate death’s grim gulf,
 The shuddering void, the awful blank—futuraity!
 And it is hard
 To feel the hand of death arrest one’s steps,
 Throw a chill blight o’er all one’s budding hopes,
 And hurl one’s soul untimely to the shades,
 Lost in the gaping gulf of blank oblivion.”

How solemn! how dirge-like! What comfort could infidelity afford? Comfort he had, but it came not from thence. He sought it not there; no, but in the religion of the Gospel! What a relief in the closing lines!

“ And my tired soul, with emulative haste,
 Looks to its God, and prunes its wings for heaven.”

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It is but doing injustice to yourself—a piece of self-imposition—to infer your feelings at death from what you feel now, The difference may be very great, unless God suffer you to die

with a seared conscience and a senseless heart. That farmer in Scotland, whose dying scene was related a few nights since, was quite easy in mind and body though actually dying: and why? He had no idea he was dying! And may it not be so frequently with persons of your way of thinking? But, had you stood by the dying bed of one in —— street, and marked the expression of his countenance when he said, “I feel I *exist here*, and I fear I shall *exist hereafter*”—had you listened to that man when in health and hilarity, you could hardly, according to your notions, have anticipated such a change.

“An infidel in health, but what when sick?”

Oh! then a text would cut him to the quick!”

Much depends, doubtless, upon the *light* under which such persons have sinned—the religious knowledge and convictions with which they were favored. “I feel,” said one, as he lay stretched on the bed of his last illness, “I feel the *reality* is very near—close at hand. You may imagine what I feel. It is stealing upon me, on and on, like the tide upon yonder shore, not to be driven back till it has engulfed its prey. Here I am, under the apprehension of standing soon a naked, guilty, trembling spirit, all memory and all consciousness—never again to sleep or know oblivion from the crushing sense of the ‘*deeds done in the body!*’ The dying bed may, indeed, be a place of torment! How past life is stripped of its deceptions! How it is shrivelled into insignificance, in connection with eternity—but as a tiny shell tossed on the broad, black surface of an ocean. Then, again, the importance of life! How intensely one views it now! The past! the past! woe is me for the past.” But it is due to say, secret intima-

tions of all this had visited his spirit when in health. The sad forebodings of it had weighed down his heart amidst scenes of gayety and dissipation; that it had covered him as a presence, and seemed sometimes to imprison his faculties as with bars and gates of iron; that when in *saloons* alive with mirth and splendor, himself the gayest of the gay, the fear of death would pass through his mind, sudden as a shot, and he would turn away sick and shuddering. What a life to lead! Some suppose familiarity with the thoughts of death renders death less terrible when it comes. That depends whether such thoughts have led to a preparation to meet it, doubtless.

You little know what your sensation shall be at that trying time, when, speaking somewhat after the manner of one now in eternity, you may be forced to say, "The *physician* tells me I cannot live—that I am all but a dead man; and the *minister* says I must now prepare for another world. All my days are gone. I can live upon earth no longer. All my preparing time is at an end. What is undone must be undone forever. My diseased body must live—my disconsolate soul dare not die. O God! what is to become of me!" A Christless soul like that, sir, is one of the saddest sights our world presents. Can you doubt it? Such cases are by no means rare. We Christians are meeting with them constantly—men who despised religion, and made Christians their *jest* and their byword, but who, bleeding and dying away from the herd of sinners, would give as many worlds as there are stars in the firmament of heaven for the comfort and well-grounded assurances of true Christians!


Bildad, in the Book of Job, calls death "*the king of terrors*." Aristotle named it "*the terrible of terribles!*" But he

was a heathen. How much more terrible, then, must death be to him who has lived and sinned under the *light!* In view of these things, one who is now in his grave exclaimed, "Better live an Indian than die an infidel under the Gospel. If it be thus with the living and the dying, how terrible must be eternity!

"Darkness above, despair beneath,
Around him flames, within him death."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TO ANOTHER—USED UP.

OME! come! sir! After all my replies to your “*friend*,” as well as to yourself, this will not do! You have wandered over that wilderness track often enough!—unless you have a fancy for imitating the Israelites in their forty years’ wandering in the wilderness, sometimes with the hills of Canaan fully in view. Really! you must find something *new*, or we shall consider you, like your friend, pretty well used up! It is not creditable, if I may alter the figure, to be always spinning the same thread, especially when it is so full of knots! (nots.) “*Not*” being so constantly a negative, is a most unfruitful little word in controversies—whether it expresses simply *negation*, or a *denial*, or a *refusal*! To deny everything, and *affirm* nothing—any *simpleton* may do that! I do not, neither do others wish to hear you at the chapel doors, and on the street, telling what you *do not believe*, without a manly expression of what you *do believe*! But if you only believe in *all unbelief*, call it not “*bigotry*” or “*intolerance*” that you are treated with disrespect. Respect yourself, and others will respect you. God himself has said it: “*Them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me*”

shall be lightly esteemed!" (Sam. ii. 30.) That is one part of the Bible you have realized to be true at any rate!

* * * * *

And what does it all amount to? Anything more than what the old Latinists used to call *petitio principii*, or to *beg the question?*—much the same as to *assume* a position—something after the order of rhetorical invention, which you illustrate very well—imagery, which would seem to prove a position, but which, in reality, only assumes it. It is not possible to *respect* such a method.

* * * * *

Better you had made the confession at first: "What am I to do? seeing I lack some standard of authority to which I can appeal with confidence!" Just so! Like poor Job, his mind as sore as his body, he sighed after some "*daysman*" or *umpire*, who might interpose or arbitrate between God and him: "*Neither is there any daysman betwixt us that might lay his hand upon both.*" And you also sigh after some acknowledged *umpire* or other to arbitrate between us in matters of "*truth and doctrine,*" to whom an appeal might be made—as much as to say, "Neither is there any divinely appointed *standard* of truth and doctrine to which one or both may appeal." But there is! Here it is!—the *Bible!*

"The Author, God himself;

The subject, God and man; salvation, life,

And death—eternal life, eternal death—

Dread words! whose meaning has no end, no bounds—

Most wondrous book! bright candle of the Lord!

Star of eternity! the only star

By which the bark of man could navigate

The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss
 Securely; only star which rose on time,
 And on its dark and troubled billows, still,
 As generation drifting swiftly by
 Succeeded generation, threw a ray
 Of heaven's own light, and to the hills of God,
 The eternal hills, pointed the sinner's eye:
 By prophets, seers, and priests, and sacred bards,
 Evangelists, apostles, men inspired,
 And by the Holy Ghost anointed, set
 Apart and consecrated to declare
 To earth the counsels of the Eternal One,
 This book—this holiest, this sublimest book,
 Was sent—Heaven's will, Heaven's code of laws entire
 To man:—

Definer of the bounds

Of vice and virtue, and of life and death—
 This book, this holy book, on every line
 Marked with the seal of high divinity,
 On every leaf bedewed with drops of love
 Divine, and with the eternal heraldry
 And signature of God Almighty stamp
 From first to last—this ray of sacred light,
 This lamp, from off the everlasting throne,
 Mercy took down, and in the night of time
 Stood casting in the dark her gracious bow,
 And evermore beseeching men, with tears
 And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live! ”

I make no apology for so lengthy a quotation. The thoughts are just, and beautifully expressed. Of no other book here below could the same be said. The poet, because describing the conversations in heaven concerning “the wondrous book,” speaks of it in the past tense somewhat, but we

have the book still—the same book, un mutilated, and translated faithfully into our own language ; and we, in turn, have given it to nations of men speaking at least *one hundred and forty-eight different languages* : it is now translated, in fact, into the languages spoken by *six hundred millions* of the human race ! You and your companions reject this book as a standard of truth ; we receive it, and prove our belief and admiration by giving it to the nations of the earth in their own tongues. This book, sir, proves itself the book of books, as the sun in the firmament proves himself the *orb of orbs*, and needs neither torch nor candle to discern his glory ! In this holy book the will of God is declared in plain

“ And obvious phrase,
In most sincere and honest words, by God
Himself selected and arranged, so clear,
So plain, so perfectly distinct, that none
Who read with humble wish to understand,
And ask the Spirit, given to all who ask,
Can miss their meaning, blazed in heavenly light ! ”

Millions now upon earth prove it so, and make it the man of their counsel, and the rule of their life, the pavilion of their peace, and the day-star of their hopes. *Myriads*, now in heaven, at *mercy's* invitation while here on earth,

“ To her voice gave ear, and read,
Believed, obeyed ; and now, as the *Amen*,
True and faithful witness swore, with snowy robes
And branchy palms surround the fount of life,
And drink the streams of immortality,
For ever happy, and for ever young ! ”

* * * * *

Beware! Hard toiling with dark and crooked reasoning! And to what end? *Motives* I judge not; but *tendencies* are evident—"to cut down the fences of virtue, sap her walls, and open a smooth and easy way to death," says one; ay, and into error by wholesale. You reason from false principles, therefore your conclusions must be false and dangerous. The truth is, you are responsible for your *belief* as for your *conduct*; not to man, but to God. Belief supposes certain facts and evidences. They may be true, or they may be false. Upon what does this responsibility rest? where does it begin? Just here: whether a sincere and proper care has been taken in the investigations of such facts and evidences, in order to acquire correct information; whether you have not allowed your judgment to become warped by evil passions; and whether sincerity or insincerity have accompanied your mind in the process. "It is amazing," says a writer, "how small a beam of light redeems a soul from the condemnation of utter darkness." Ay! and it is amazing how small a beam of light renders a man *responsible for his errors*, and liable to eternal condemnation! Ponder the following, where part of your *logic*, in gibbets, receives a parting blow:

"If faith's compelled, so is all action too:
But deeds compelled are not accountable;
So man is not amenable to God.

It was the master-stroke of wickedness,
Last effort of Abaddon's counsel dark,
To make a man think himself a slave to fate,
And worst of all, a slave to fate in faith.

Behold a man condemned!
Either he ne'er inquired, and therefore he

Could not believe; or else, he carelessly
 Inquired, and something other than the word
 Of God received into his cheated faith;
 And therefore did not believe, but down
 To hell descended, leaning on a lie."

God never sent a pagan to hell for ignorance of what he could not know. In the great day we shall be held accountable for what we *might have known*—certainly for what we *did know* in regard to truth and doctrine.

* * * * *

Not so! You cannot draw me off to other themes! You remind me of an old woman in Ireland who kept a tavern: one market-day, a Methodist preacher began to preach to the crowd standing near her door. Being pleased with his looks and zeal, she brought him out a chair to stand upon, and listened attentively. At length he began to warn them of the evils arising from *intoxicating drinks*, at which she became very uneasy, and stepping up to him at length, she said, "I would be *obleged* to ye, sir, to change the subject!" Like her, it seems you have all the light you want from that direction, and the less the better for some of your party!

Here then we must part. I pity you, but as you intend to cling to error and sin, to which the Bible gives no quarter, the clearer the evidences of its divine authority, the more "troublesome" it is, most certainly. You invite me into the regions of conjecture. I cannot leave the Bible to go there. *Conjecture*, besides, makes a poor array, when set face to face with *fact*. Burns, you remember, says that on a certain occasion, he

"Clawed the elbow of troublesome thought!"


Belshazzar in like manner—"his thoughts troubled him." (Dan. v. 6.) That hand-writing on the wall—of conscience—bodes no good. "*Possibles* and impossibles!" I am tired of seeing infidels rubbing those ears so continually, without obtaining anything but chaff. It seems as if you and your party have ceased to dream that these two ears of infidelity shall ever be able to accomplish that which the "*seven ears*" did in Pharaoh's dream—"withered, thin, and blasted by the east wind," as they were. (Gen. xli. 22-24.) Why in such haste to those altitudes? Your infidel ladder is not made for scaling such inaccessible places! When a man tries to be more than he can be, it is pretty certain he will soon be less than he is, or has been! Not one in a thousand reaches anywhere near half-way up there; and if you were there, what could you do there? Infidelity offers no instruments to assist you in the necessary investigations. An unregenerate sinner in heaven would feel himself as much in place. I understand you, however! Have you noticed that freak of Baron ——, who jumped out of a window in Paris, and broke a few of his bones? In apologizing for his somerset, he said he was only learning to be lively! It is well the man did not break his neck! But I do know of one who, in trying to be lively, has broken the neck of his argument, although I believe it was pretty well disjoined before!

In conclusion, I have had frequently to remind infidels of the extreme scantiness of their material of thought. This is the reason, I suppose, why they are such sticklers for the negative side of a question. I told one the other day that he seemed as fond of his "*nots*" as any Roman Catholic of his *beads*! This attempting to destroy everything in matters of

faith, and leaving *blank nothing* as a substitute, is pitiable—I ought to say *contemptible*; but when such would be merry over the matter it excites one's *abhorrence*. Pray, sir, seriously and solemnly, what is there in your system to attract or fascinate, much less satisfy a rational mind? A gloomy refuge—a church-yard repose, the best you can make of it; and carrying about all the while a *conscience* armed with an evil prediction against you, of which you cannot deprive it, though for a time you may succeed in imposing silence! And for this you would barter away your hopes of immortality and eternal life! You may be glad to be “quit” of me, but you have found a more troublesome companion in your own conscience! To it and Providence, I commend you.

CHAPTER XXIX.

TO ANOTHER—THE STRAY ARROW.

HE arrow does not always hit the mark intended by the archer, unless he were another William Tell. It is so with the *spiritual archer*; a truth aimed at one conscience may pierce another, as in your case. It is as the Holy Spirit pleaseth. Beware of supposing that salvation is a great way off, or that the process of forgiveness requires a certain length of time, or a series of performances. “*The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, the word of faith which we preach.*” (Rom. x. 8.) Read the whole passage carefully and prayerfully. If you are a sincere penitent, and your heart is upright before Him who reads the heart, and you are truly in earnest for salvation, and willing to be saved on His terms, you will find the way of salvation in this passage both plain and easy.

A similar inquiry to your own was made by one centuries ago: “How can I have an arm long enough to reach unto Christ?” He received this reply: “*Believe, and thou dost take hold of Him.*” Luther defined justification by faith thus: “Jesus Christ hath loved me and gave himself for me, and I believe it.” If ten thousand sermons were to be preached

upon it by the first talent in the Church of God, they must all of them make that the grand central point.

If the Bible was not oftener appealed to in that discourse, my conclusions were not reached but by its light. It gave me light to reason by. The natural sun creates day, though himself not be often seen through the whole of it. No one doubts in the daytime that the light diffused through the atmosphere proceeds from the sun. Apply the thought to the Bible, and the course of argument which arrested your attention. Without the Bible, I had been like Plato when about to deliver a lecture to his disciples on the creation of the world and the generation of the gods, who told them "not to expect more concerning these things than the most *likely conjecture*." He felt the need of some such authority as we have, to confirm his sentiments. Indeed, in his celebrated "*Dialogues*" he freely confesses it. Instance that reply to the argument of Socrates, which Plato puts into the mouth of one of his disciples: "I agree with you, Socrates, that to discover the certain truth of these things in this life is impossible, or, at least, very difficult. We ought, therefore, by all means, to do one of two things: either by hearkening to instruction, and by our own diligent study, to find out the truth; or, if that be impossible, then to fix upon that which appears to human reason best and most probable, and to make that our raft while we sail this stormy sea, unless one could have a still more sure and safe guide, such as a divine *revelation* would be, on which we might make the voyage of life in a ship that fears no danger"—a sentiment that might well make every Deist in this land ashamed of himself!

Doubtless the strongest proofs of our immortality are in the

New Testament. That might well be anticipated, as it belongs to a higher dispensation. It was reserved, as one remarked, to grace the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is "*the way, the truth, and the life.*" It was but darkly shadowed forth in some parts of the Jewish dispensation—sufficient, however, to awaken the hopes and fears of that people. Angelic visitors and prophetic messengers strengthened the principle by engaging their faith in glorious or fearful realities beyond. It was a light shining in a dark place—like the flickering light in the ancient tomb, ready to expire amidst the darkness and vapors which encompassed it. Jesus Christ, "*He brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel.*" With the apostle let us say, "*Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!*" Amen and amen!

* * * * *

Be faithful to the grace already given. How gracious has God been to you in Jesus, besides exercising so much *long-suffering* in the past! You should busy yourself much in the Holy Scriptures, but beware of extremes; for if we are to "read nothing but the Bible," to be consistent we should hear nothing but the Bible, and that carried out would put an end to preaching. Mr. Wesley, I remember, made a similar remark. We should be so familiar with Scripture as to be able to detect and slay any error that may happen to assail us. "*The word of God*" is called "*the sword of the Spirit*" by the apostle, and this is one reason. "*It is written*" was the hilt of that sword which our Lord wielded against Satan during his great temptation in the wilderness.

As to religious controversies, I do not, of course, condemn them altogether; they are often necessary for the defence of

the truth. When *error* is rife or rampant, we must not flinch from maintaining the *truth* against it; otherwise we should break a command: "*Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*" (Jude, 3d verse.) This apostle gave a strong reason for it in the following verse: "*Certain men*" had *crept* into the church "*unawares—ungodly men—turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*" It is to such *faithful contendings* we owe, under God, the purity of doctrine and religious freedom which we enjoy. The less you are in the company of such persons the better. They may do you an injury, and you are not yet strong enough, I fear, to cope with them, or to do them much good. They may perplex you, or shear you of your strength. If Providence seems to cast you among them, or bring them in your way, why *play the man!* Jesus will help you! But when duty is over, disappear. A good man in London remarked that we should go into the company of *worldly men* as we go into a *rain-storm* sometimes—not to amuse ourselves, but because business calls, and we put on a great coat and take an umbrella, and hurry out of it soon as possible! St. Paul advises, "*Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,*" as you would put on an overcoat in going out into a storm. Enter into his spirit, be governed by his maxims, assume his interests, and be wholly on his side. Every blessing on thee!

There is a serious flaw in your friend's reasoning. The Bible is not so bulky a book as to require such retrenchment. Perilous work that! It might open the way to all manner of mutilations. And in generations to come there might arise as many controversies about the lost portions as about the lost ten

tribes of Israel! This is an age of speculation, and rife with money-making schemes and retrenchments. He is little aware to what an extent such a matter would be carried were it once to receive public favor. There are men, too, who would rejoice to see the day when the Book of God is reduced to the size of a sixpenny pamphlet.

No, sir! The Bible! the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible! Parsimonious fragments and abridgments, in lieu of the Bible, would be a crime against man, and high treason against God and the royalty of divine inspiration. "*Search the Scriptures,*" says Christ—the entire Scriptures, and not part of them; for the neglected part might possibly contain that portion of truth necessary to the eternal salvation of some particular soul. And now that you love that book, it is none too large for you!

It was the whole Bible found at Erfurth that awakened Luther amidst the errors of Popery, and not the *fragments* of it, cunningly strung together to suit the purposes of the Romish Church. No! rather, I was going to say, have the Bible in *chains*, as Luther found it in the convent of St. Augustine. What an event that was! Luther, a poor, distressed penitent, seeking comfort, and finding none. But he found the Bible—found it *chained* to a desk—but, though in chains, its unmutilate truth found way into his soul, snapped his spiritual fetters, opened the iron gate of unbelief, set him at liberty, and sent him through Germany like a moving pillar of fire! Luther, in turn, unchained the Bible, clothed it in the language of Germany, and sent it out through the land, conquering and to conquer!

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They will perplex and weaken you if they can. Satan is ready to help them; for he longs for your overthrow. You are doing his cause more injury than you are aware. Why all this stir? Stand not too long on the defensive. Be the *aggressor* sometimes. Start difficulties, raise objections, press questions; put them to it in defence of their positions! More may be done in this way, often, than merely to defend one's own principles. By the way, I found some days since, a few stanzas of an old poem, copied several years ago, when in a certain part of the world, from one of the old poets. Set them to work upon it! Every verse is a good text! Quaint though it be, in thought and phrase, give the piece fair play, and it will be a match for them; besides, its antiquity may win it respect. The following stanza seems but a fragment of the poet's address to the Creator:

“THOU leavest thy print on other works of thine,
 But thy whole image thou in man hast writ;
 There cannot be a creature more divine,
 Except like *Thee* it should be infinite.”

And next proceeds to investigate the nature, power, and tendencies of the soul, as proofs of its divine origin and immortality:

“But whoso makes a *mirror of his mind*,
 And doth with patience view himself therein,
 His soul's eternity shall clearly find,
 Though th' other beauties be defaced with sin.

“First, in man's mind we find an appetite
 To learn and know the truth of every thing,
 Which is co-natural and born with it,
 And from the essence of the soul doth spring.

- “ With this desire she hath a native might
To find out every truth, if she had time;
The innumerable effects to sort aright,
And by degrees from cause to cause to climb.
- “ But since our life so fast away doth slide,
As doth a hungry eagle through the wind,
Or as a ship transported with the tide,
Which in their passage leave no trace behind :
- “ Of which swift little time, so much we spend,
While some few things we through the sense do strain,
That our short race of life is at an end
Ere we the principle of skill attain :
- “ Or God (which to vain ends hath nothing done)
In vain the appetite and pow'r hath given ;
Or else our knowledge, which is here begun,
Hereafter must be perfected in heaven.
- “ God never gave a pow'r to one whole kind,
But most part of that kind did use the same ;
Most *eyes* have perfect sight, though some be blind,
Most *legs* can nimbly run, though some be lame.
- “ But in this life no soul the truth can know
So perfectly, as it hath pow'r to do :
If then perfection be not found below,
An *higher place* must make her mount thereto.
- “ Again, how can she but immortal be,
When with the motions of both will and wit
She still aspireth to eternity,
And never rests till she attain to it ?
- “ *Water* in conduit pipes can rise no higher
Than the well head from whence it first doth spring ;

Then since to *Eternal God* she doth aspire,
 She cannot but be an *eternal thing*.

“ And though some impious wits do question move,
 And doubt if souls immortal be or no;
 That doubt their immortality doth prove,
 Because they seem immortal things to know.

“ For, he which *reasons* on both parts doth bring,
 Doth some things mortal, some immortal call:
 Now, if himself were but a *mortal thing*,
 He could not judge *immortal things at all*.

“ For when we judge, our minds we mirrors make;
 And as those *glasses* which material be,
 Forms of *material things* do only take,
 For *thoughts*, or *minds* in them we cannot see:

“ So when we see God, and angels do conceive,
 And think of *truth*, which is eternal too,
 Then do our minds immortal forms receive,
 Which if they mortal were, they could not do.

“ And as, if *beasts* conceived what *reason* were,
 And that conception should distinctly show,
 They should the name of *reasonable* bear;
 For without reason none could reason know:


“ So when the soul mounts with so high a wing,
 As of eternal things she doubts can move,
 She proofs of her eternity can bring,
E'en when she strives the contrary to prove!

“ For e'en the thoughts of immortality,
 Being an act done without the body's aid,
 Shows that herself alone could move and be,
 Although the body in the grave were laid.

- “ Her only end is never-ending bliss,
Which is the eternal face of God to see,
Who last of all ends and first of causes is :
And to do this, she must eternal be.
- “ How senseless, then, and dead a soul hath he,
Who thinks his soul doth with his body die !
*Or thinks not so, but so would have it be,
That he might sin with more security.*
- “ For though these light and vicious persons say,
‘ Our soul is but a smoke or airy blast,
Which during life doth in her nostrils play,
And when we die doth turn to wind at last : ’
- “ Although they say, ‘ Come, let us eat and drink ;
Our life is but a spark which quickly dies ; ’
Though thus they say, they know not what to think,
But in their minds ten thousand doubts arise.
- “ Therefore do heretics desire to spread
Their light opinions, like these epicures ;
For so their staggering thoughts are comforted,
And other men’s *assent* their *doubt assures*.
- “ Yet though these men against their conscience strive,
There are some sparks within their guilty breasts
Which cannot be extinct, but still revive ;
That, though they would, they cannot quite be beasts.”

CHAPTER XXX.

RECONNOITRING INFIDEL POSITIONS.

RUTH! Your *inquiries* concerning it are not unwelcome. It will be well if you can say as much of my replies! A Frenchman candidly remarked that to such as are determined not to relinquish error, truth must ever be unpalatable. To the *well-meaning* and *honest-hearted*, truth, he thought, could never give offence, even if carried up to the highest point of *plain-dealing* and *faithful remonstrance*; that, if it come from a *friend*, it will ever be distinguished from the rancor of an enemy, as the friendly probe of a physician from the dagger of an assassin! An admission which, I hope, you will not lose sight of!

Such "*queries*" as yours were, perhaps, never so rife in this town as now among all grades of unbelievers. A great revival of religion is great for creating such effects always, and in all places, more or less, as the leaven of infidelity happens to be diffused. The Gospel fully and faithfully preached, awakens attention, like a sudden blaze of lightning and thunder among the clouds, setting some *quaking* and others *querying*. The *principles* of Christianity, when brought thus into action, are too tremendous in their nature and consequences to permit men remaining long without sentiment regarding

them, favorable or adverse. We may say the same regarding the *preacher!* The hopes and fears of the people are too much interested to allow of a long continuance of indifference or neutrality. To be neither *for* nor *against* is an anomaly, as Christ hints: "*He that is not for me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.*" A divine in Switzerland insisted that the intolerance of the Gospel arises from a principle laid down by our Lord, by which it considers every man an *enemy* who is not a *friend*. Rely upon this: when *the* Gospel is preached, this *fact* soon develops itself in the hearts of the hearers. I think we may safely say of every man who holds out against the Gospel, when thus preached, that he is a *skeptic* upon some point or other, which arms him against its claims, and renders him immovable.

It is impossible to conceive of any fact so immense and so overpowering as that of *religion*. To enable a man to stand in its presence unmoved requires the assistance of a *doubt*, equal in strength to him who said, "*My name is legion.*" Even in such a case, I have learned not to despair. A sinner who, in the bottom of his heart, recognises another great fact, that it is *optional* with him whether he *entertain* this doubt or *reject* it, is not a hopeless case! I believe with the celebrated old Thomas Adams, that the devils have *faith*, but they have no *hope*; that hope is the life of Christians (ay, and a life amid much death in the hearts of sinners!) and that the want of hope makes devils. Devils *believe and tremble*, but they have no hope. Our faith would make us tremble, too, were it not for hope. On this principle I account for so much of that "stony air" observable in some, rather than an entire surrender to infidelity.

Indifference is one of the most difficult opponents I meet with in any country. *Persecution*, in certain forms, is nothing to it. A disposition to inquire or investigate is an angel to it. An *irritable* sinner is assailable, and may receive a back-handed blow from truth, if thrown off his guard, which may bring him to his knees. How often have I armed myself in going forth against *indifference*, and returned from the attack weak-handed and discouraged! The heaviest pieces of my pulpit artillery had been as ineffectual against it, apparently, as the chirping of grasshoppers. What an incubus of this sort of indifference we had upon us when we commenced this effort! It was said, if we held on thus, we should certainly drive the people out of their senses! when it was evident they had not been *in their senses* for a great while! At any rate, they were *senseless* enough—had fallen a prey to spiritual death, hopeless as the scene in “*the valley of dry bones*,” or next to it. “Few,” remarked one, “succumb under acute diseases; the majority die of the chlorosis and marasmus of complete indifference. The words ‘church, divine service, and sermon’ make them yawn. They bear the brand-marks of impending judgment, and the signs, if not of rejection, yet of the capability of it. Satan even does not seem to think these people worthy of an energetic attack. Like dead trees, they fall to him of themselves, and he finds them in his net before he spreads it.” A mournful picture! Compare it with the state of things around us. Not one has gone out of his senses, in the sense predicted by *formalism*; but what multitudes have found their senses! The dead trees are alive again! Indifference has given way!

But, as is always the case in such a work, skeptics are

wide awake also ! They seem to be much of the Spanish Jesuits' minds—" *Beatus qui prædicat verbum inauditum* "—" Happy is he who proclaims a doctrine not yet heard ! " They remind us of the Athenians of old, who spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or hear some new thing. (Acts xvii. 21.) Demosthenes, were he alive and among us, might with propriety transfer his impression of the people of Athens to — (and by the way, it is curious to notice the coincidence of the orator's remark with that in Acts) : " I found them inquiring perpetually in the place of public resort, *if there are any news.* " May the poor unbelievers among us, who are yet doing homage to the hemisphere of darkness, turn to the light of the Gospel—turn from "*lying vanities*" and the husks of falsehood "*to the truth which is after godliness,*" moulded after it—that truth which *follows* after godliness, helps the soul to overtake it, and, with both truth and godliness, enter into heaven. Amen !

Skeptics, though boastful, are usually dissatisfied with that which they mistake for *truth*. No more truth is in it than that Satan is "*an angel of light,*" whatever transformations it may undergo. (2 Cor. xi. 14, 15.) Error, like Satan, may be so transformed ; but, mismanaging its drapery, its nature and origin may be seen in its dusky complexion ! *Impatience* of contradiction has led it so to spring round and round of late, in certain arenas of controversy, to an imprudent showing of "*the cloven foot*" of its "*father the devil.*" John viii. 44 is worthy of your closest attention. It contains one "*truth*" which may be of great value to you.

These late *dissensions* among the churches have made these skeptics bold, as if all religion were falling to pieces. As Stil-

lingfleet remarks, "Weaker heads when they once see the *battlements* shake, are apt to suspect that the foundation itself is not firm enough, and to conclude, if anything be called in question, that there is *nothing certain!*" How applicable to many now, as in 1650! It is amusing how they change front so often!—this is not safe "in the presence of an enemy," in military tactics! They want to know the truth, but when truth appears they reject it, as the Jews did their true Messiah when he came! They profess a liking for truth, if they did but know it—have an altar for it, as the Athenians had, "*To the unknown God.*" And if it was really so that the people of Athens never allowed an *idol* to be placed upon *that* altar, it is much to their credit. Would that we could say as much of these skeptics! To exalt *error* in the place of "*unknown truth*" is to fall beneath the dignity of the Athenians. Never yet have I found two infidel writers to agree. Their *disagreement* in this town is notorious; except in one thing—to oppose the truth, as revealed in the Bible.

The definitions of truth, by our modern skeptics, remind one of the squabbles of Grecian and Roman philosophers of ancient times as to "*the chief good*"—their favorite phrase for *happiness*—which called forth no less than *two hundred and eighty-eight* opinions! All these were diverse, agreeing only upon one point, viz., in reasoning from *false principles* and from wrong premises. Plutarch tells us of a thoughtful and sincere man who, after hearing the philosophers wrangle upon "the chief good," as to what it consisted of—some assigning it to one thing and some to another—like yourself, fearing he should miss of true happiness, resolved, if possible, to acquire the whole, hastened to the *market-place* and bought up all the

good things he could find, certain that he could not miss it, if the philosophers were right! Poor man! he was disappointed. Nothing was wanting that his person or stomach could crave, but his soul, finding no food suitable to its nature, was as dissatisfied as ever. Real happiness eluded his grasp, as truth and happiness do yours! He sought it not in God, and then doubted whether any such good existed. “*Who will show us any good?*” inquired some of old, when assailed with unbelief. (Ps. iv. 6.) I marvel not that you have had a similar temptation concerning *truth*.

The opinions of ancient philosophers, and those of our modern unbelievers, are all *chips* from the same block of error—threads drawn from the same *goat-fleece* of depravity, which never hold together—*streams* from the same troubled fountain of the unrenewed heart; so many heads of the same old *hydra* of speculative atheism—that old self-constructing *Polypous*, Satan’s *masterpiece*! begotten of everlasting *doubt*, and by its infernal touch transforming men into *everlasting doubters*, until they go where doubts end and *devils tremble*.


One opinion occurs to me which prevailed among the ancient philosophers. It was this: that “the chief good” consisted in having the *animal nature* subjected to the *rational*. This opinion was associated with a severe *discipline*. But, as one observes, the *animal*, in spite of all they could do, rose above the *rational*, and the *brute* ran away with the *man*! Gigantic fallen nature proved itself another Samson against the unregenerated powers of the soul. *Reason*, self-confident, forged many chains to bind it, but they parted like threads touched by flame. *Reason* was then “consulting physician,” itself sick, or, at its best estate, broken-witted—a crazy doctor

undertaking to cure a delirious patient. I need only point you to some of the best expounders in the clubs at ——, and in —— street, for a modern exemplification!

The victory of the *rational nature* over the *animal* can only be achieved on Christian principles. “*Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God,*” says Jesus; and it is equally true, until a similar change passes upon the soul, there can be no such victory. “*Born of God*”—“*a new creature in Christ—old things have passed away, and all things become new*”—are the scriptural intimations of this great change; repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the instrument thereof.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“LATE AN INFIDEL”—A PARLEY.

 BOASTING! Ay! no lack of that! It is their method of keeping up courage, and inspiring heart and boldness in their companions. What has a sensible man to boast of in their notions? This revival has not kindled the spark of infernal enmity—has not originated it, I mean; but it has fanned it into what it is—not against us so much as against the Gospel, and against the Lord, its Author. As a German divine observes, Satan has seduced them to join in his colossal attempts to war against the power and majesty of God in the Christian religion, and to bury the whole world of religions and moral sentiments in the gigantic grave of an atheistic materialism: “*antiquated ideas*,” he says, is the *sarcophagus* in which they would place the Gospel. And of this they would boast. Unhappy men! Let us hope and pray.

If the truth were known, many of them to this hour have similar embarrassments to what that celebrated American orator and statesman, John Randolph, had—a *mother's early instructions and counsels and prayers*. Early initiated into the skepticism of the French Revolution, both by books and companionship, he confessed, but for the example and instructions of his mother in early life, he would have been a

French *atheist*. In a letter to a friend, he said: "When I can just remember, I slept in the same bed with my widowed mother. Each night, before she put me to bed, I repeated on my knees before her the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed; each morning, kneeling in the bed, I put up my little hands in prayer in the same form. These lessons, I am now conscious, are of more value to me than all I have ever learned from my preceptors and compeers." In his retrospections, he tells another: "They used to call me a French infidel, because I was a Frenchman in politics, which was unjust; but the truth is, I would have been a French atheist but for the recollection of the time when my mother made me put my little hands together and say, '*Our Father which art in heaven,*' &c." What a lesson for mothers have we here! Had Voltaire, Rousseau, and Paine had such mothers, the world would not have been cursed by such standard-bearers of Satan. They have their successors. Well would it be for some around us if, like Randolph, faulty though he was—if, like him, they took pleasure in consulting the Scriptures. When triumphantly reëlected to Congress, instead of being elated, he wrote to a friend who had congratulated him, "I do assure you, with the utmost sincerity, that so far as I am personally concerned, I cannot but regret the partiality of my friends. I am engrossed by sentiments of a far different character; this great concern presses me by day and by night, almost to the engrossing of my thoughts. I am never so free from uneasiness as when reading the *Testament*, or hearing some able preacher."

In reply to the question, "How may I be assured of the will of God, and of my acceptability to him?" to the New

Testament I must again refer you. *Read, believe, obey.* “*If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*” (John vii. 17.) This is our Lord’s own testimony and promise. It is written, “*God commandeth all men everywhere to repent.*” And again, “*This is his commandment, that we should believe in his Son Jesus Christ.*” When you render obedience to these commandments, then shall you know the doctrine that it is of God. “*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.*” (Rom. viii. 16.) He who enjoys such a witness has no lack of evidence, and comfort too. Stopping short of this—to refer to Randolph again—was the cause of his sad state of mind, which he moaned out in a letter to a friend, thus: “In the most important of human concerns I have made no advancement; on the contrary, as is always the case, when we do not advance, we recede. I have fallen back. My mind is filled with misgivings and perplexities that leave no repose. Of the necessity of *forgiveness* I have the strongest conviction; but I cannot receive any *assurance* that it has been accorded to me. I have humbly sought comfort where alone it is effectually to be obtained, but without success.” To another he said: “Once, of all the books of holy writ, the Psalms were my special aversion; but thanks be to God, they have long constituted a favorite portion of that treasure of wisdom, and my version is scored and marked from one end to the other.” There is a wonderful majesty and assurance discovered in the word of God, when we receive it as such, and entirely rely upon it, in faith and obedience. But after such a discovery, if we “fall away” from it, the consequences are very serious. We grieve the Holy Spirit, and

Satan triumphs, and either deep despondency or hardness of heart follows.

You may, perhaps, remember my remarks to a friend of yours, regarding Plato's acknowledgment of the necessity of some divine revelation, by which, in this life, *certain truths* might be discovered beyond mere *conjecture*; that, till then, if truth could not be found out without some accompaniment of doubt, the best human reason could do was to fix upon that which seemed to be the most *probable*! His idea of a "*raft*" struck your friend—*reason*, constructing its own *frail raft*, by which to sail this stormy sea of life, timid, and uncertain as to the port of destination; and his ingenuous relapse into the felt necessity of some authoritative communication from heaven, in which, as in a well-appointed ship, the voyage of life might be made fearless of danger! How sad to find so many in a worse condition than Plato, now that a revelation from heaven has been vouchsafed to the world! I say, in a worse condition; because it pleased God to reveal doctrines to us which Plato never knew, but with which your old friends in unbelief have had so long to contend, and now more than ever—poor souls! Your friend allowed there was "a melancholy beauty" in those sentiments of Plato; but how mournful to see men persisting in such a raft-making mania, while the heaven-constructed ship—*Divine Revelation*—is at their doors. It needs no prophet among us to foretell their fate who venture the hopes and hazards of eternity afloat on such a raft. Bible-despising presumption is destined to terrible calamities.

CHAPTER XXXII.

TO THE SAME—THE BIBLE.



O Plato's idea of the difference between *reason's raft* and *faith's ship*—a revelation from God—pleases you. Come on board, sir. Plato would, were he upon earth, and gladly, too. Let us hope that he gained the heavenly port upon his doubtful raft. It was all the Almighty thought proper to place within his reach. If lost, it was not for disregarding a book which he had never read nor seen; or for denying a Saviour, of whom he never heard. The case of your friend's "—— Club" is widely different.

2. Several years ago, when in Canada, I had the pleasure of perusing a volume of the late Mr. McNichol's works. One of his illustrations, showing that the Bible was fitted for man, and man for the Bible, was ingenious and striking. I took a few hasty notes of it at the time. Looking over them this morning, it occurred to me they might be profitable to him whom I now address—and to others, let us hope. My notes, on looking them over, are so meagre, and having no access to the volume to refresh my memory, I may as well confess to an intention of adding a little here and there, as we proceed with the singular but striking illustration.

We will suppose I am entirely ignorant that there is on

earth the shadow of such an art as that of a *mariner*, or that there is such a vast reservoir of water as the *ocean*. I am at last made acquainted with the fact, and I bend my steps to the sea-shore.

Lo! I behold an immense pile of timber, but very compact, floating on the wave. I inquire eagerly, "What is that?" I am told it is the *hull* of a ship of considerable tonnage; that its design is to bring invaluable treasures from beyond the sea. But I ask, "How do you mean to convey such a large body to so great a distance?" It is jestingly replied, "By oars, to be sure?" I ask again, "What are oars?" They are described to me, with the assurance that the Greeks and Romans used them with great success. I begin to think it quite possible that the vessel might be thus transported.

Some days after, when walking along the same coast, I behold a singular and confused apparatus of lengthened poles, and ropes and canvas, scattered on the ground. I study them with intense curiosity, but for my life I cannot comprehend their use. On inquiry, I am informed they are intended to be reared in a certain arrangement on the surface of the said hull I beheld yesterday, with a view to her more speedy passage through the waters, by means of the wind. This is a new idea. It comes as a flash of light upon the mass of materials which lie before me, although there are many of the pieces and fragments I can by no means understand from any description.

Finally, I see the whole applied to the vessel. My conviction and admiration of their uses are increased. I now see how this and the other piece of cordage, and so on, which, so far as I could judge, were useless, are now essential to

the rest. Behold the well-appointed ship floating, as Keats observes,

“ Floating between the waves and air,
 Each glad to claim a thing so fair ;
 Her white wings to the sunshine gleaming
 In anchor'd rest—bright ensigns streaming,
 As if they wish'd away to fly
 From the proud ship they glorify ! ”

Well, I am invited to take a voyage in this ship. I go on board. The anchor is weighed, the helm taken, the sails are shaken loose, the wind blows, the canvas receives it, and the new locomotive world, to my amazement, moves onward through the ocean, and soon landmarks and land sink in the sea, and our ship,

“ Alone on the deep, as the moon in the sky,
 A phantom of beauty.”

The ship moves on, and in a style of majesty and swiftness which I would have pronounced a fancy a few weeks since, hearing of it only from the representation of another person. I now, to my own knowledge, find the use of everything, from the cable to the slightest cord, and from the mainsail to the smallest sheet that flutters in the breeze. All is animation on board—“ our ship, like a child of the sun,” arrayed in morning glory, presses on gallantly. The sailors are singing among the shrouds, a joyous laugh on deck, and the music of ripple and spray outside, as she surges onward to her port, and a passenger here and there reminding one of Parnell's lines :

“ Who, as he watches her silently gliding,
 Remembers that wave after wave is dividing

Bosoms that sorrow and guilt could not sever—
 Hearts that are parted and broken for ever.
 One deems that he watches afloat in the wave
 The death-bed of hope, and the young spirit's grave !”

Other ships join us, and we traverse the deep together, a noble and well-appointed fleet.

Let us apply this illustration. The *hull* of that ship I compare to our *frail nature* deprived of the precious materials provided in the Bible. Like a naked bark, I see a *human being* floating on the dangerous deep of life, idly, and without aim, because destitute of that high and regulated impulse by which he might gain the port of eternal bliss—but, without which, he never can ; as well try

“ To cross without a magnet undiscovered seas.”

We will suppose I am entirely ignorant of the Bible. I take it up for the first time. I look it over. I here find what appears to me to be a confused mass of materials. I begin to speculate upon its parts without a due regard to their use, and I erroneously condemn the whole. I return to it, and gaze upon an assemblage of various materials, as I did upon that disjointed tackling separate from the hull for which it was intended.

But, a person begins to explain to me their use. He first begins with *man* ; his soul and body, and circumstances in which he is found. He then explains the fitness of the Scriptures, through all their varieties (as the tackling for the ship), and tells me they are designed to carry him forward toward eternal perfection. I begin to comprehend the several parts of the Bible—the general combination ; the nicety of instances in minute application ; the skilfulness in mechanism, contrivance, and importance of design, surpassing far that singular

mass of materials prepared for the floating hull. But the water for the vessel, and the vessel for the water; the tackling for the hull, and the hull for the tackling. The Bible for man, and man for the Bible. The adaptation appears to me complete, in theory; will it be so practically?

An instance occurs: a *man*, hitherto regardless of God, of heaven, and hitherto unacquainted with the Bible, or uncontrolled by it—motionless, or only guided at random by some fitful expedients devised by ignorance. I behold those materials in the Bible, which appear to me so disjointed and confused, properly supplied to this creature. Thus furnished, he begins to move forward in a steady and new direction, onward and heavenward, like a vessel furnished with strong and skilfully constructed masts and rigging, with sails swelling before the invisible wind, and off upon some important voyage. I then behold another and another fitted out in like manner, and steering out across the ocean of life for the port of glory. Finally, I myself, so long an interested looker-on, begin to feel *my* wants and peril, and a gracious impulse to move out from my inglorious position, and weigh anchor also, and spread sail for the same port of destination. But I am entirely unprovided for the voyage. Not a mast have I to poise, nor sail to spread, nor rudder to direct, nor compass, nor chart. I look toward the Bible. After so many have been fitted out for the sea of life, is there enough left for me? “Yes! and for millions more like you,” says a voice. Proper application is made; I, too, am supplied. I bid farewell to the land of sin and vain glory. The breezes which blow from Calvary waft me onward. Rapidly and pleasantly now the voyage of life is passing. More than once I have caught a glimpse of the

heavenly coast; and, by the command of "*the Captain of our salvation,*" I shall ere long drop into port—ay! like the Alexandria ship into the Roman port, with top and top-gallants up! And there are quite a fleet of us, and the voice of joy and thanksgiving is on our decks, each singing his much-loved sonnet—and my happy soul sings it, too, melodiously :

“ When for eternal worlds I steer,
The seas are calm, the skies are clear,
And faith, in lively exercise,
The distant hills of Cauaan spies,
My soul with joy she claps her wings,
And loud her lovely sonnet sings,
Vain world, adieu!

“ With cheerful hope her eyes explore
The landmarks on the distant shore,
The tree of life, the crystal stream,
The golden streets and pastures green,
Then, with what joy she claps her wings,
And loud her lovely sonnet sings,
Vain world, adieu!

“ The nearer still she draws to land,
More eagerly her powers expand ;
With steady helm, and well-bent sail,
Her anchor drops within the veil ;
Again with joy she claps her wings,
And loud her lovely sonnet sings,
Vain world, adieu!”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

TO THE SAME, AWAKENED—GLIMPSES OF TRUTH.



THE attention of "a hearer." Your "view" is correct. Reject the Bible, "and it leaves a man like a thing of chance, to sink or swim, upon the vexed waters of life, 'mid perilous waves of human opinion." Ay! like a ship without anchorage, port or shelter, chart or compass—resembling him of whom it was said,

"Sped by the hurricane's wing,
His compassless bark, lone, weltering, dark."

2. Reject the word of God, and we wander, in endless mazes lost. Receiving the Bible as such—the word of God—you have that to rely upon, instead of the opinions of men without number, diverse as their features, all as fallible as ourselves. To find the truth and the will of God, after we have rejected the Bible from our confidence, amidst such a heterogeneous mass, would be like searching for a needle in a stack of straw! The contradictory opinions of the leading minds of that society is notorious. To give your will over to such for education, would be a rash act. I question whether you would risk much

of your property to their honor. Why then trust your precious soul? To allow *your will* to be schooled by such—nay, be fooled, and afterward commit yourself to the guidance of such a *will*—would be, as one sharply observed, to place yourself at the disposal of a *fool* and an *enemy*! “To fall into the hands of the living God,” after having fallen into such hands, is, as the apostle hints, “*a fearful thing.*” (Heb. x. 31.) I am persuaded you have more sense. That you have been strongly tempted to such a course, is pretty evident. May God save you from the calamity hinted at in the above text; for incensed justice can never be appeased in hell. A sinner sinning eternally, must be in collision with divine justice eternally.

3. Observe two things: *First*, the Bible is a unity. For though it was transmitted to earth by the medium of a number of writers, they have not contradicted each other; and they declare the will of the same God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Second*, observe the operations of your own mind; I mean the *effects* of any set of principles, *for* or *against* that book; their respective tendencies in leading you to virtue or vice—to purity or to impurity—to honesty or to dishonesty—to truthfulness in all your conversations, or to carelessness as to the truth—to sobriety or to levity, if not to the haunts of the drunkard or debauchee. Observe their effects upon your conscience, in making it soft and tender or hard and callous; upon your judgment, will, and reason; upon your temper and disposition of heart; whether such principles tend to make you a better or a worse man in the various relations in life, as well as in the hour of temptation. It is thus I would have you judge which class of principles or opinions is most likely to have the sanction and approbation of a holy and just God. I have

no fears that your verdict will go against the Bible. Then believe, and act accordingly.

4. That which leads you to the fear of God, and to the love of God, to self-denial, and to repentance and faith in Christ, and earnest desires for salvation, is surely of God. The impulse is from Him. It is God himself commenting on that command in his own word, "*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*" (Phil. ii. 12, 13.) Persons in your state of mind frequently illustrate this passage in their experience, before ever they know there is such a text in the Scriptures.

5. Ponder that declaration, "*It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*" Wonderful, is it not? How infinite the condescension! Observe: when it is thus, the will of God and the human will are brought in contact. The *will* is the *master-wheel* of the human intellect; all "the lesser wheels" are set in motion and governed by this. The results are seen on the dial-plate of the conversation. That was a good remark of one, that when Christ has won the *will*, he has won the *man*; and when Satan has won the will, he has won the man; and when sin has lost the will, it has lost the man. He thought there was much of the *heart* in the will, or God would not have said, "*My son, give me thy heart.*"

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It is just as you view it! One long since gone into eternity called the *will* the *Fort Royal* of the soul—that *stronghold* that stands out stoutest and longest against all the assaults of Heaven. He considered all to be won when the *will* is won; the *castle* is won—heart, judgment, reason—the entire

man. It is a great point in preaching, sir, to bring the *will* of the sinner over on the side of truth and righteousness.

It will be well to follow up that thought. Baxter's thought was somewhat similar to mine, if I recollect right, thus: "That will that is not fetched from God, and moved by his will, as the lesser wheels in a clock are moved by the first wheel, and by the poise, is no better than *self-will*. A will not dependent upon God's will, is an idol, usurping the prerogative of God; it is to make a god of self." He insisted that the will of man is, or should be, the terrestrial throne of God; there he must reign, and reigning, he invests the will with the command of the inferior faculties; that to be loyal unto Him who sitteth on the throne, the will should not have one wish or desire, unless it can prove or infer that it is the will of God.

Hence the necessity of a *revelation* from God! To will what God wills, it is necessary to know what that will is! In the Bible this is plainly revealed. This is good argument for that book. It is therefore of the first importance you should *will* to believe the Bible as a revelation of God's will concerning you. It is to this very crisis those grand facts which "make up the internal evidence of the Scriptures" are designed to lead your inquiring mind. Having once received the Bible thus allow, of no abatement in your faith. Reverence entirely its decisions. Allow of no appeal from its authority. And that you may not be tempted to seek occasion, give it the entire authority over your *will*, and by your will rule yourself altogether according to the will of God. When the love of God is shed abroad in your heart, your *will* shall then have an easy rule—rather, I ve shall rule :

“Sink down, ye separating hills,
 Let sin and death remove ;
 'Tis love that drives my chariot wheels,
 And death must yield to love.”

That it may be thus, your sins must be forgiven through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord, and your soul regenerated, or *born of God*.

A remark of an old divine may be in place here. It is this: “*Sin* is not ripe till it reaches the will, though it enter by the flesh and the senses. It is not found nor called sin till it reach the *will*.” Ponder that observation. It may be of essential benefit to you when tempted. I like to tell believers that *holiness* is not ripe till it reaches the will also. It is not formed, nor found, nor called holiness until it reaches the will ; thus the *will*, in a state of entire conformity to God’s will, governs the entire man. Indeed, holiness is nothing else but a complete conformity to the will of God.

What is done in these short addresses must be done quickly. We have had but little more time lately than barely to glance at some of those great principles out of which the grace of repentance may spring. Forget not that Jesus has declared, “*Ye must be born again ;*” otherwise, to say nothing of the loss of heaven, we may say of your good purposes, as did Cæsar of the works of Cicero, “They are as *sand* without lime.” I believe with Cecil, that but a small matter is accomplished when we have persuaded an unregenerate man to believe as we do ! We have as little to boast as if we had succeeded in laying a dead man straight who was crooked before !

The *best* of moral men, as well as the *worst* among the immoral, stand in need of this change to render them acceptable

to God and fit for heaven. It is a thorough change. "Words have lost their meaning," as one says, "unless this change, *being born again*, is a radical one—a change great in its character and lasting in its consequences—a change that reaches downward into the deepest recesses of the soul, and forward into the ages of eternity." Look that you may be emptied of self and self-sufficiency before you are filled with divine grace and power. The Israelites in the wilderness gathered no *manna* so long as the dough lasted which they brought out of Egypt! While any of that remained in the camp, no manna from heaven fell around the camp. You are to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ; but the Spirit of God never puts that upon the top of the *rags* of self-righteousness. And so St. Paul expresses it in his own experience: "*That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*" (Phil. iii. 9.) Christ must be all or nothing. The *rags* of the *old righteousness* must be entirely stripped off your soul before you can be robed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Consider these things, and may God give you a right understanding of them! Harken to my text: Col. i. 19.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

TO ANOTHER—THE BIBLE DEFENDED.



THE old maxim that the *adamant* must be polished by its own dust, and heaven seen by its own light, was never truer than when applied to the Bible and Christianity, and the disability of skepticism. The Bible is that adamant. Its texts are as the dust to the adamant; the texts of one part of Scripture polish or illustrate another. Thus we find that about *two hundred and sixty* places of the Old Testament are cited in the New, and for this very purpose. We may say the same of Christianity, one principle of which polishes or illustrates another. Infidelity has no material of sufficient solidity of texture to effect what you propose. The human brain alone is too soft to produce anything to affect either! Hell itself cannot forge or temper a chisel hard enough for the purpose! All are at fault. Thus, after fastening upon a text, and forbidding the aid of any other, you turn it round and round, and finding it impregnable, fling it away! We cannot see the heavens by torch-light, or gas-light, or oil-light, or bon-fires, or even by the glare of a volcano! Heaven must be seen by its own light. The Bible and Christianity must be seen by their own light. What the sun and moon are to the sky, the Bible and Christianity are to the firmament of theology.

The light in which they are to be seen and the weapons by

which they are to be assailed must be of equal authority. Find them if you can; otherwise you resemble one who would see the sky by rush-light, or who attempts to shake a mountain with the stroke of a feather, or one who refuses to credit the testimony of the king of day until he has examined the orb and his beams by the light of a tallow candle, or he who will not credit "the testimony of the rocks" to the facts of geology unless he can dissolve them by his breath, or first open their seams by the application of a straw! The Bible is much above you every way, sir. Believe it, or leave it alone, for you cannot invalidate its testimony!

Oh! may God pity your poor distracted soul, and bring you to your "right mind," for you seem far from it at present. However, I have often observed that when Satan is about to lose a subject, he exerts himself in strange ways to prevent it! But for the value of the soul at stake, and the momentous interests involved, I could have laughed ere this many a time at the hawk-like gyrations and infernal ingenuity of this old *soul-hunter* when hard put to it. I have given him some trouble in my day; and I am under the power of *considerations* you have never imagined, to preserve my own poor soul from falling into his hands.

One of two things is plain to me: either you *understand* these doctrines and hate them, or you *misunderstand* them, and shun them with the prejudice of ignorance. A farmer the other day employed his scytlie in mowing down grasses and herbs for his cattle, indifferent as to their names and medicinal uses. Not so a bystander—an *herbalist*, ready to appropriate them to yet nobler uses. It is one thing to be able to read the names of medicines labelled on the drawers in the shop of

a druggist, and another to know their medicinal virtues. He who has studied them thoroughly will not be joked nor jeered out of his knowledge, by the ignorance or prejudice of one who knows nothing about them. This let me say for myself, if the principles of religion are exalted high on my lips, I bless my God they do strike down deep in my heart. With regard to yourself, I can no more doubt that you have read enough in the Bible to satisfy conscience that you must repent and believe in Christ, or be condemned, than doubt whether you know the English language! Also, that there is a record in your memory, such as John Bunyan had, when you heard a voice within your mind, as distinctly as he heard it: "Will you leave your sins and go to heaven, or have your sins and go to hell?" Is it not so? In the vocabulary of unbelief you have succeeded admirably; but it is questionable whether you have been equally successful in teaching it to your conscience, or in banishing old principles, realities, and possibilities. St. Paul thinks not. He tells us to reject a *heretic* after the first and second admonition, for which he gives us three reasons: "Knowing that he that is such is *subverted* and *sinneth, being condemned in himself*"—that is, he is conscious of his own *insincerity* in acting against the truth which he knows. (Titus iii. 10, 11.) I would not, however, forget that it is written, some are given up to "*strong delusions that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*" (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.) A man should make himself very sure of some very great advantages, who believes a *lie* rather than the *truth*! What thinkest thou?

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In reply: The ancient Turks never shunned a person who had the plague, because they believed it was written on every man's forehead, at his birth, *when* he should die. In such cases they usually pointed to the forehead! If you will excuse a *parody*, I trust my *forehead* is sufficiently fortified to prevent either my faith or practice from being affected by the plague of unbelief, with which you are so grievously afflicted! The word "reject," in the passage I quoted the other evening, means not to allow a man who is a heretic to remain a member of the church to disturb its peace. Titus was a pastor, and this direction was necessary from an apostle, as to excommunicate a person from the church of Christ was considered a great calamity. Men think too lightly of the matter in our times. The passage does not prohibit efforts for the salvation of such an one; so you may let that pass; I have not travelled beyond the limits of my charter! There are certain temptations which hang like bullets on the eyelids of the understanding, so that the light of truth cannot penetrate. St. Paul speaks about having the eyes of our understanding "*enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints;*" and of others "*whose minds are blinded, because of the ignorance that is in them.*" As to yourself, you are the best judge, unless you are like the blind woman of whom Seneca speaks, who insisted that the fault was not in her eyes, but in the absence of light from the room! It is not best you should be over-positive. A light may have reached the eyes of your understanding, and found them closed—like the windows of that house in — street, which would require *light* to be armed like the light-

nings of heaven to pierce an entrance into those dark chambers beyond!

The apostle imputes such blindness to Satan, whom he calls "*the god of this world*;" he who "*blinds the minds of those that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto them.*" Now mark—"those that believe not," he blinds. They are at first *disinclined* to believe, then *resolved* not to believe, and then Satan so blinds them that they *cannot* believe. Old Elymas, the sorcerer, Paul scrupled not to call "*a child of the devil, full of all subtilty and mischief, and an enemy of all righteousness.*" His father the devil had blinded his mind, and God, by a word from the lips of Paul, blinded the eyes of his body. Between Satan and God, he had an unhappy time of it, poor sinner! He would not believe that the *Sun of Righteousness* had risen on the world, and allowed Satan to close his eyes against his beams! God so closed his outward eyes he could not see the natural sun nor its beams. His talent for doubting was directed into another channel—so that in searching for some one to lead him, he might, if so disposed, go on doubting whether the orb of day had yet risen on the world. He refused to credit the Scriptures concerning Jesus, and the testimony of those who had been saved through the atoning death, because he allowed the hand of Satan to close the eyes of his mind; and the Lord by his hand quite sealed the eyes of his body, at Paul's word: "*Behold the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun*"—"then there fell on him a mist and a darkness, and he went about seeking"—not to do evil, for this blow from heaven had quite unfitted and embarrassed him in doing Satan service—but "*seeking some to lead him by*

the hand!" It is thus, sooner or later, that eternal justice comes up with the workers of iniquity, and unfits them for satanic purposes! Beware then, for God may interfere with your operations in a manner that may cause you *sorrow!*

If there is one declaration more than another, in the New Testament, which Satan wishes had never been written, it is that in 2 Cor. iv. 1-4. In that you find Paul's apology for want of success in preaching the Gospel in particular places, or among certain classes of hearers. Here we find a complete exposure of satanic policy—enough, one would think, to alarm those hardened sinners who sit unmoved, out of their hardness and unbelief, even when listening to the most pathetic and moving portions of the Gospel message. They are "lost"—in the mazes of error—lost to all feeling, being "*past feeling,*" as the apostle marks elsewhere. *Blind and lost*; and Satan is the cause of the first; the losing part of the business is the result, and of themselves. Did they but *believe*, the loss would be on Satan's side; for God would open their eyes to the light, as quick as he shut the eyes of Elymas, if they did but *believe!* But they "believe not," says Paul; therefore Satan maintains his power to *blind their minds*, or veil the glory of the Gospel from their view. Thus, they neither perceive its tremendous claims, nor feel its power; and so wandering on, are "*lost*" in *deeper and deepening darkness*, and *increased and increasing hardness*, till a sudden death involves them among the *forever lost*; like that *veteran among hardened hearers*, who perished *notoriously* the other day. When the sinner is damned, Satan gives him light enough upon all subjects, till he believes and trembles like the rest of *Hell!*

English families are apt to take pride in their escutcheon, or family shield—arms, or ensigns armorial of the family. If they but knew the *origin* of some of them, which their ancestors had humility enough thus to acknowledge and perpetuate, they would find little cause for pride or vain-glory! and to pay a government tax upon it, besides! Were I a painter, or an engraver, and called upon to draw a picture of *Satan's family escutcheon*, I would select *chains* as the principal figure, and every link *black* as darkness. "*Chains of darkness*" was St Peter's idea. (2 Peter ii. 4.) A volcano in the background, to render those chains dismally visible, might be the next figure. The ancients, you know, long believed the *volcano* to be a mouth of hell.

Darkness is a word in frequent use in the Scripture, denoting Satan's power—thus we find, "his kingdom is full of darkness." "*The power of darkness*" was our Lord's sorrowful acknowledgment in the garden of Gethsemane, the night of his betrayal. "*Reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day,*" was Jude's idea. "*To whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever,*" is another expression of Peter. St. Paul speaks of deliverance from "*the power of darkness.*" (Col. i. 13.) Doubtless he thought, just then, of the words in his own commission to preach, from the lips of Jesus Christ himself: "*I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me.*" (Acts xxvi. 18.) The family of Satan, here in this world, are said to "*walk in darkness;*" and their works are called "*the works of darkness;*" and their children are "*the chil-*

dren of darkness." Besides, "*the rulers of the darkness of this world*" are spoken of; invisible and wicked *spirits*, supposed by some, in which may be included, perhaps, wealthy and powerful sinners. Such is the state of the world, on the side of Satan. St. John declares that the whole world lieth in the arms of the wicked one—the word in Greek will bear, lying in *the jaws of the wicked one*. What a horrible position! ready to be crushed to death whenever God permits, but never until "*the sin unto death*" has been committed. (1 John v. 16.) I believe the devil kills all who die in their sins. Consult Heb. ii. 14.

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The doctrine of *satanic influence* is a part and parcel of divine revelation. We receive that with equal faith as we do the rest. It is impossible to read the Scriptures attentively, and not perceive that such *spiritual beings* as angels and devils do exist—invisible beings, at work for good or evil in this lower world. Nor is it to be denied, in the face of Scripture and experience, that "*the fiery darts of the wicked one*" fly as thick around the *Christian's integrity* as they do around and through the *skeptic's infidelity*. Indeed, in the former, those darts seem more swift, direct, and straight to the mark than against the latter, in whom the battle has been fought and won by Satan. Why cannonade a fortress that has surrendered? The Christian is like a fortress uncaptured, though besieged. The gates are shut, and he who commands within will neither surrender nor parley with the enemy without. Satan never tempts a hypocrite to doubt the safety of his state, nor a skeptic. He is too wise for that. The Spirit of God acquaints such with the fact. The arch-fiend attacks those who are

right, to lead them wrong; but lulls and soothes those who are wrong, to keep them in the wrong.

In the mean time, be not high-minded, but fear. *Ants* taught wisdom in the days of Solomon. (Prov. vi. 6.) Wise men have learned much of "inferior animals," and so may you of these humble Christians. We read that *birds* have been very useful to shipwrecked sailors upon strange coasts, as they assured them what fruit it was that was safe to eat. However beautiful and tempting the fruit might appear, the sailors touched them not, unless the birds had first pecked them; then they partook freely. A lesson for you and your companions here! If persuaded they are true Christians—and this you may know by comparing them with the character of Jesus and the precepts of the apostles—then imitate them. It will be better for your soul and body. Much as some of you have affected to despise these humble ones, there is a time of *acknowledgment* coming, and not far off, that the *virtues* they practised and the *vices* which they rejected were marks of the soundest wisdom; when you would give worlds for their hope and assurance, or even a crumb of their comfort—ay! wish a thousand times that an hour's existence or an *option* of better things had never been vouchsafed unto you, or that your *heart* and *choice* had been better disposed for improvement.

I am sorry these Christians are not more *lively*; but the burden of souls is on them, and the sight of their eyes affects and agonizes their hearts, and they look sorrowful—no great victory having yet been achieved by the Gospel among them; and some of their near and dear friends being in danger of dropping into hell. Perhaps yourself may be a cause of it in some, if

the truth were known. "A sight of you is enough to make any devout person melancholy," said one to one of your brethren in unbelief! "*The world knoweth us not,*" says John. We are an enigma to them; they know not what to make of us! They behold our actions, but the principles from which they spring are a secret to them. "*The wind bloweth where it listeth,*" saith Jesus, "*and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*" The motions of the wind perplex the philosopher, and the operations of the Spirit confound "*the natural man.*" The philosopher, however, is too wise not to admit a cause, and too philosophic to call it "*foolishness.*" (1 Cor. ii. 14.) "The spiritual man," as Luther observes, is a puzzle to "the natural man," who knows his face and manners, but is quite unable to discern from *whence* those words, not now wicked and blasphemous as before, but holy and godly; or from whence those motives and actions! The policy of appearing thus gloomy or sad in your presence some might consider doubtful; for my part, I respect *sincerity*. If not really joyful, it would be hypocritical to seem so. "*There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh,*" says the inspired writer. These serious Christians think it no time for laughing in the presence of a poor sinner who may be in hell in an hour. Tell me, do you not in reality think them worthy of more respect and confidence than if they yielded to levity before you. Is not their seriousness more consistent with their principles?

CHAPTER XXXV.

TO ANOTHER—PLAIN-SPOKEN.



Y! They are too wise to learn of God, and fools enough to follow the seductions of Satan.

“Expert to move in paths that Newton trod,
From Newton’s universe would banish God!”

Too wise to learn of the Bible, and yet simple enough to put supreme confidence in books and periodicals of a certain sort, which have little else to recommend them except some talent displayed in finding fault with Christian belief and practice, without offering to the world anything better in their place! They have too much reason to be guided by reasonable men, yet so bereft of reason as to be led away into the most drivelling nonsense by wicked and unreasonable men. St. Paul came in contact with such in his day, and considered a *deliverance* from them a matter worth praying for, as we may see from 2 Thess. iii. 2: “*And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.*” Or, as the Greek has it, “*from absurd and wicked men.*” It will bear the sense of “*disorderly, unmanageable, and wicked,*” who have neither *faith, fidelity, nor trustworthiness*. And did you see the peril of trusting in such guides, with uplifted hands and wet cheeks you would offer a similar prayer.

What good you can reasonably expect to accrue from such company it is difficult to see. Surely you see and know enough from week to week to awaken your suspicions. Can the stream rise higher than the fountain? Can that be *right* which such men extol?—or that wrong which such despise?

“But they *seem* as positive of being *right* as the most zealous of your denomination.” Of course they do! A contrary manifestation would ruin their cause, and they know it! The difference between them and us is this: we have the best of reasons for being zealous, and happy, too!—and such arguments to support our *positiveness* as they never knew, never muster for the cause of unbelief!

Infidelity! it is a *pit*, my friend!—a *pit*; yet, strange to say, it does not seem such to those who are in it; at least one would think so, or they would cry unto God to be delivered from it. They have become used to its gloom, doubtless, and consider it preferable to the clearer light that shines on the *surface of truth* from the Bible. The gloom of that pit renders a coming eternity doubtful or dubious. The light of the Bible renders their damnation certain. It shows also, indeed, a way of escape, but as that demands a renunciation of the works of darkness, they prefer the pit and the gloom. Many of its prisoners, through ignorance of the Gospel paradise, never awake to the peril of the place, till the light of eternity flashes about them—as in the case of that *veteran in unbelief* who perished yesterday. He saw, when too late, that he had long been living within the vortex of the pit that is bottomless. (Rev. xx. 1.) Seized upon by despair, “his descent into the region of darkness,” to use an idea of a German, “was palpable to the horror-stricken watchers.” Or, like another,

who finished life with the cry, "Call time again! Call time again!"

There will be a pretty general "jail delivery" by and by. The great *Judge* is preparing for them. It will be terrible when it comes. Oh! but I hope *you* may not be among them! Satan contemplates it. But He who is to be your judge offers to be your Saviour now—would rather your prison delivery might be effected by the power of the Gospel. (Rom. i. 16.) A number of such have already been rescued by this Gospel. And not a few have seen it, and feared, and turned to the Lord. But, alas! many are standing in the dark passages of your pit, ready—all made ready by Satan—to be driven, like the swine of old, out and down "*a steep place,*" into eternity. Others, to use an idea of Summerfield, between whom and hell there is but a hair-breadth line, and they are sporting on that hair, and the angels are expecting their fall every moment into the burning gulf.

Rely upon it, the crisis is nigh at hand, although the *clouds of divine justice* still keep their station, held in balance by the *clouds of mercy*. "*Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds?*" (Job xxxvii. 16.) "*For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near, a cloudy day; and the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain upon Ethiopia, and when the slain shall fall in Egypt*"—this spiritual Egypt. (Ezek. xxx. 3, 4.) Ay! the day is near when some, whose "joyful laugh" rings nightly in your ear, shall be made to lament that they ever had an existence, or else that they had not a heart to use it for better purposes. Perhaps the memory of such neglect may become the fuel of their misery hereafter. Oh! what multitudes are this moment weeping and wailing in hell on account of

those very courses which you and your companions are now pursuing! I mean, because they were such fools as to live just as you now are living. The hope of one day getting up yonder in Paradise, out of sight and hearing of these things, comforts one's heart!

Depend upon it, your present mode of "reasoning" (if worthy of the name) and *living* will make your burden very heavy when passing through the dark valley and the shadow of death. Why keep such company? Why countenance *errors*, to say no more, which in your judgment you cannot but condemn? Are their hopes so fascinating, and their likely lodgings in eternity so desirable, that you cannot abandon their society? It cannot be! Come out from among them, then. Why not? What is to hinder? Escape for your life! They are poisoning your mind, and preoccupying it with thoughts unworthy of your intelligence and intellect, and which may become a source of great annoyance to you in future life, should you turn to God. I knew a pious and devoted minister who suffered much from this very cause. When happy in the love of God, the skeptical reasonings of the companions of early days had no influence; but no sooner did he become low in his religious feelings, and matters not going after his liking, than they would recoil upon him with fearful force. Allow these warnings a place in your memory.

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True! Jesus Christ died for *all*! That I declare with my whole soul, you are a witness. And it is true also, that "*whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" But it is also written, "*How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?*" He died for sinners, and

for *thee*; but, with an eminent divine, I believe—and let his words sink down into your heart—“He did not die for final infidelity as predominant in any soul.”

Let me warn you again: *Skepticism* is a swamp, whose boundary line is the *pit*. The farther you proceed in it, the more you will become entangled and bewildered, and the more unlikely your return to the tranquil gardens of revelation. “*Reason*” should tell you as much, to say nothing of *conscience* or of *faith*. Alas! Reason is a proud faculty in some, and like Diotrephes of old, “*loveth to have preëminence.*” And as that character refused to receive St. John and the other apostles, disallowing them to speak to the church, it refuses to receive these. One called it, when out of conceit with its guidance,

“Bigoted, one-eyed, short-sighted reason!”

To speak the best word for its capacity, unaccompanied by the light of revelation, we may credit it, with Dryden,

“Dim as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wand'ring travellers,
Is *reason* in the soul.”

Christianity has nothing to fear from *reason*, if reason only keep its place as the handmaid of *faith*—not going *before* faith, but following after. “If it go before, it diminishes and weakens faith,” said a pious man; “but if it *follow* faith, it increases and strengthens it.” I have often thought of the remark, and never found it aught else but true. We claim for *Christianity* the candor and fairness which are accorded to the *science*—for it is a *science*. Let reason treat it as such, and test it thoroughly, as the other sciences are tested, accord-

ing to its principles, and we have nothing more to say. Then let reason speak out all she *knows*, and all she *hopes*, and all she *fears*, all her *doubts*, and all she *believes*; with this proviso, that what she *does not know*, because the facts lie quite out of her province, let her learn of *faith*! We give a somewhat similar advice to reason as Paul gave to the Christian wife, that, instead of *debating* or *disputing* points of doctrine, etc., in the church, she was to inquire of "*her husband at home.*" Let reason, if it will learn, ask its husband, Faith, at home!

For my part, I would say with the Rev. Mr. Arthur to a London audience, "Let every star in the heavens sing, and let every stone in the earth speak out all that is in it, and when the voices of all the realities in the universe are heard, no one voice will ever drown the *supreme verity*, which the good among men know is there—'*The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul!*'" He was speaking to timid theologians and politicians, who trembled for the honor of *revelation* in the progress of this stirring and inquisitive age. Let *reason* speak out all she knows, but let her speak the truth, and, like a wise and prudent preacher, know how to stop when she has done! But when she steps out of her province to speak of things which she does not know, when she flings aside her modesty to become a *teacher* without having taken out her degree from the Bible, and proclaims herself independent of *faith*, then does she deserve rebuke!

When replying to questions in the pulpit, I feel under no obligation to do what you suggest. Satan is ready for every such advantage. I have no wish to fill the minds of the people with the rubbish of infidel objections, which have been defeated a thousand times. I follow the plan of the great and good

John Newton, who observed, "My principal method of defeating heresy is by establishing the truth. One proposes to fill a basket with *tares*; now, if I can fill it first with *wheat*, I shall defy his attempts!" Ay! but if a hearer comes with his *basket full of tares*, my method is to persuade him to allow me to empty his basket of tares, and fill *it with wheat*. In doing this, it is not always necessary to touch every tare; they hang together so that if one gets hold of a leader among them, a slight jerk or so, with an unceremonious bump on the basket, it is emptied at once! and if one has a plentiful supply of *wheat*, nothing can be easier than to fill the basket with wheat! Do you understand me?

For the above reason, I can only say you have spent the day in reasoning from *wrong premises*; how then can your conclusions be correct? When you start *propositions* which are

"As bastions set point-blank against God's will"—

I mean, against the decisions of God's word—you are reasoning thus; the Scriptures of truth disclaiming you at every step, and you disclaiming Scripture! Like a hound the other day (excuse me!), your reason spent both time and strength on a *false scent*. But unlike that fine animal, that swept gracefully around and retraced his steps back to the point of divergence, your reason proclaimed a triumphant conclusion, without finding aught but "*dread nought*," as if pleased with any plea to impose upon your own conscience. Let my hearers observe one thing—never expect an argument to come to a correct conclusion that sets out in a flat denial of a "*Thus saith the Lord*"—by which I mean that which God has plainly revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

It is easy to raise difficulties and start objections. I be-

lieve with Cecil, there is *light* enough to guide the humble and teachable to heaven; and *obscurity* enough to confound the unbeliever! Behold mercy and judgment here, and goodness and severity. Pray for a humble and teachable spirit, my friend. When unbelief busies itself in seeking occasion, God has so ordained that it need not be long disappointed. Oh! beware! No longer

“Enlarge and fortify the dread redoubt,
Deeply resolved to shut the Saviour out,”

lest, in your dying hour, you may be forced to exclaim with one, “I have denied my Lord, like Peter, but I have not repented like Peter!” Better a thousand times, my dear sir, that you should, like Pollok’s antiquaries,

“Be groping in the dark unsearchable
Of finished years,”

midst medals, faithful to the memory of temples, towers, and columns laid in dust, rending, if you please, “the mantling cloud of time, to fling new radiance on *tradition’s* page,” than thus to spend your precious time and talents in groping for occasions against the Bible and its offspring Christianity. Neither has anything to fear from your course, it is true; but the injury to yourself may be irreparable. You may mantle your mind with a cloud of “doubtfulness” never to be irradiated by the beams of a gospel day.

Your “facts” I cannot deny; and if Christianity had no other foundations, it would indeed be an unstable system. That its credit has suffered by the foolish freaks of enthusiasts, may be admitted; madmen—like that poor fellow who thought he might ascend to heaven, as well as Elijah, in a chariot of

fire, and so set his barn on fire, that when the flames reached his elevated position among the hay, the thing might be accomplished. The *chariot*, as it approached him, looked so uncomfortable, that he concluded not to go up just yet, and hastened out of the way! If *science* had never been abused by its votaries, your facts might be more telling against religion. Who that has ever spent a night at Florence, has not admired the beauty of that sky to which Galileo so often turned his great invention, the telescope, from the neighboring heights? and that *galaxy*, or *milky way*, overarching that fine Italian firmament, like a canopy of silver, fringed with deep and infinite blue? Galileo, after all his persecutions, had taught the people of Florence to look up, and, by aid of his wonderful instruments, study the lore of those stupendous skies. But I was informed of a woman who was as fond of looking up there as any of them, especially at the milky way, which was her admiration. Taking advantage of the uncertainties of telescopic information, she declared it as her opinion that it was all done in honor of Rome—and the Pope, of course—insisting that in breadth and length it exactly covered the road to Rome! With her arms extended, she would exclaim, “Behold! see the Virgin’s chariot! Regard that beautiful tracery of light, which extends itself even as a canopy over the holy road to Rome!” And yet no one hinted that this little episode in science occasioned any slur against the science of astronomy, or doubts regarding the discoveries of Galileo.

Nor have I learned that the notion of this enthusiast disturbed the faith of England in the principles of Sir Isaac Newton, or the revelations of Herschel! No! nor if all Italy had been of the woman’s opinion! Nor did I hear that Scot-

land was at all disturbed by it; the people still persisting rather in belief of the testimony of one of their own sturdy countrymen, that the milky way is only designed to carry our vision through another ascending step in the scale of magnificence, and into another and higher planetary arrangement. And had both England and Scotland been carried away by the delusion, I doubt not that on my return to America I should have found the people of the United States firm in the belief of the great facts of astronomical science! "Why should they not?" you exclaim. Stop a little! The Scriptures of our God have mysterious places—altitudes "dark with excessive brightness," as well as profundities, beyond the ken of faith—at least, faith, like our telescopes, has only offered us sufficient to awaken our curiosity, without satisfying it. Now, if a few enthusiasts, like that Italian woman with her theory of the galaxy, have taken advantage of this, and proclaimed their disgraceful nonsense, why should you think that a sufficient cause to shake the faith of the whole world in the established facts of the Christian religion?

CHAPTER XXXVI.

TO THE SAME—PLAIN DEALING.



MY replies, in this way, must necessarily be short and fragmentary, especially from the pulpit. Particular cases must not be allowed to absorb time which belongs to the majority. A few flashes of light, according to my ability, is all that can be given. When certain inquiries run in the direction or intended track of the sermon, remarks may take a wider scope. A few minutes thus spent, I have known to do more good than all the rest of the discourse beside. Hence my readiness to reply; such occasions are excellent auxiliaries to preaching, the object of which ought to be to do good, whether systematically (as some talk) or not. And now a few hints for "*one who thinks.*" And who does not, my friend, seeing that man has been called a *ruminating animal*? Very well, think on—think vastly, intensely, profoundly, sublimely; "great in conjecture and brilliant in fancy"—what good? "Discoveries!" what are they, pray? Any new thought never before broached? What is it? How much would it, or ages of such speculations, better the condition of the world? Allow me, however, to apprise you there are heights, stupendous heights, yet unvisited. You have but barely entered the field of investigation—have commenced an

ascent, and got a little above the smoke of vulgar fires, while

“ Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps o'er Alps arise.”

It is premature, if not ridiculous, to blow your trumpet there, while Christianity, in her Alp-like grandeur, towers above you into the very heavens!

Ascend, sir! Napoleon made a road over the Alps into Italy for his troops—a stupendous undertaking it was! I crossed over by it a few months since. What tunnels and bridges are there! and how it winds around the mountains like a ribbon, and along the cliffs and precipices! Ascend, sir! ascend the Alps of our Protestant Christianity! It invites your ascent, but apprises you, by the way, that infidelity will fail you before you are halfway up! You can only mount by the steps she has cut out for your “*intellectual feet.*” There are rocks which infidelity has no tools to tunnel, chasms of profound depths which it has no means of bridging; for such *shadows* as you propose are too unsubstantial to bear the weight of a thought, to say nothing of the worth of your soul. *Faith*, and that only, can supply the want—can build a bridge across even *the gulf of death*, as Young remarks, and land thought safely on the farther shore! But you know, sir, as well as I do, that your “system” is not fond of climbing such altitudes, its tendencies being rather in the contrary direction!

* * * * *

Nay, sir! but I respect your talents. Ascend yet higher! You are certainly capable of it. Do not lower or degrade yourself by the *slang* of infidelity. You are capable of greater things—of scaling higher summits, and of desecrating yet wider ranges of thought. Alas for you! but for that clog upon your

powers—and how it mildews everything it touches!—all that would otherwise give energy and freshness to thought, and warmth to the heart. As matters are, what avail such speculations? What happiness can they afford you? Nor do they fling any lasting lustre on your being, or solve in any degree the enigma of existence. Down *there* you have found no solution, nor where you stand; climb yet higher, and it is only to grasp at shadows. This is all *your* “*philosophy*” can do for you. “We plant the ladder of investigating cogitation, but its steps only lead us into impenetrable mists,” said one on the Continent. “Death has been silent from the first; the grave below is silent as well as the stars above; mysteries remain sealed — those of our present being and those of a future life; we have no means of fetching truth up from the deep, or down from heaven. We are only groping in the dark and grasping at shadows; and what is the fruit of all our investigations?” A forlorn confession, is it not? How otherwise can it be, when the Bible, which contains the secrets of life, death, heaven, and hell, is discarded? Can you hope to succeed in some likelier speculations when mightier minds have failed? And to what end?—anything more than to show that man, more than any other creature, is the completest failure! Harken! we are forbidden to say in our hearts, “*Who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above); or, who shall descend into the deep (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead)? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, the word of faith which we preach.*” (Rom. x. 6, 8.) Ponder this passage!

* * * * *

Allow me also an illustration. Suppose your birth-place

and home to be some star, which, though travelling toward our globe "thousands of years," is not yet visible to any of our telescopes. Suppose some revelation, like our Bible, should be pushed into circulation on your orb, with expounders, making you acquainted with a world called *Earth*, of whose existence you had never before heard, by which you are made acquainted with its aspects and inhabitants, their virtues and their vices, and the nature of the divine government under which they live, its palaces and its prisons, and the rewards and punishments meted out to the deserving. Perhaps it might come to pass you would be quite as *incredulous* regarding such announcements from that book and its expounders, as you are at present toward the Bible and its expositors with regard to a world to come!—the glories of an eternal paradise, and the fires and horrors of an endless perdition—with all which you are made familiar from the pulpit. What thinkest thou?

On that far-away orb to learn the *facts* in the history of another far-distant planet called *Earth*—its geography, its various tribes and nations and governments, the original fall of its progenitors from holiness and God, its arts and its sciences, its court-houses, jails, hospitals, and mad-houses, the robberies and murders and various crimes perpetrated upon its surface, and the terrible punishments inflicted, the rejoicings of the good over repenting sinners, the horrible oaths and blasphemies of millions of the ungodly, the wealth and splendor of some, the squalid poverty and distress of others—in a word, *all* with which we, the inhabitants of earth, are familiar—and you should be informed, also, that at no very distant date you might expect to be transferred to earth, and

that it depended upon your moral and spiritual character, on arriving there, with what class of earth's inhabitants you should be judged fit to be associated—what effect would all this have upon your mind, think you, as *unbelieving* as at present? The application, in full, I must leave with your own "cogitations;" only allow me to remind you of the revelations of the Bible—the two hemispheres of eternity, heaven and hell; in the former, called to view by faith a world of light and beauty, the dwelling-place and paradise of the holy and the good, where they fill heaven with their songs of pure delight, "swelled and aided by all the harps of God," for ever with the Lord, enjoying happiness—

"Vast as their wishes, permanent as their being,
The past unsighed for, and the future sure!"

Where they are, to use the language of Scripture, "*before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*" Who would not desire an eternal habitation in such a place?

"Where no care for to-day, nor thought for to-morrow,
Can sadden the joy of those happy abodes!"

Alas! in the other hemisphere of eternity, we behold a hell, where, "prominent in characters of fire, are read" these words—"The fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. xix. 15)—illustrated by "*the smoke of their torment,*" ascending

"*up for ever and ever.*" (Rev. xiv. 9, 11.) Of course it gives me no pleasure to cause such a horrible place to loom up before your unbelief—still thinking it better you should go down there for a few moments by contemplation, at least, rather than you should unwarned descend into eternal condemnation at last.

* * * * * * *

The question is an important one; but a clearer idea of that dreadful place, which Dives called a "*place of torment,*" you can find on no page than what you may find recorded in such passages of Scripture as Rev. xiv. 9, 11; Matt. xxi. 8, xxv. 41, 46; 2 Thess. i. 7, 10; Mark ix. 43, 47; with glimpses of it in Matthew, thirteenth chapter. All of which you may consult at your leisure, and many more which you will meet with in various parts of the Bible. I believe, with an ancient divine, that one of the most dreadful *wails* in hell will arise from a recollection of the *neglect* of the warning voice of conscience upon earth. He called conscience a salamander, which can live in fearful flames, and stings like a scorpion both with head and tail. Conscience has an instinctive apprehension of hell in every man. It seems to have been infused into that impression of accountability after death so deeply imbedded in human nature. But a sense of guilt, and the voice of God in his word, make conscience cry out in a most awakening manner in most sinners. It *warns* before sin, conscience does; and it *gnaws* after sin. Skepticism may *lull* it for a little, but it takes very little to arouse it again.

It was said of one that it was as if all the furies of hell had leaped upon his heart as on a stage; that fear and sorrow met in his soul as at a feast; that fear and anguish had

divided his soul between them—*Thought* calling to Fear, and Fear whistling to Horror, and Horror beckoning to Despair, saying, Come and help us to torment this sinner! Hell enough that for one man in this life!

“But ah! destruction stops not there,
Sin kills beyond the tomb!”

The man was leaving the world, but conscience united with these in assuring the departing spirit that the consequences of sin would proceed with it across the boundaries.

Hell, in eternity, is a state of *being* without *well-being*. For no man in the proper command of his senses can suppose that such descriptions of the “*place of torment*” in eternity, which we find recorded in the New Testament, can possibly mean anything good, or easy to be borne, or of short duration. And surely no wise man will parley long with a temptation who continually meets it with that line imputed to one of old,

“If mine eternal soul must be the price.”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

BAPTISM OF FIRE!—TO THE SAME.



O, my friend!—all that ceases when the soul finds peace with God. Up till this hour, in the nineteenth century, people are realizing in their own hearts the *experience* of those Christians of the *first* century, of which St. Paul testified: “*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*” Have you never met with that pleasing stanza:

“No doubt is in the human breast,
When clam’rous conscience lies at rest,
 Appeased by love divine;
Where peace has fix’d her snow-white throne,
And faith and holy hope are known,
 And grateful praise erects her shrine.”

Christian experience, like *day*, brings its own evidence. It is like *sunshine*—it brings its own witness. Who ever mistook lightning for sunshine? It is like the *fire* with its heat, or the *rose* with its fragrance—there is no mistaking its nature and reality. It is of “*the workers of iniquity*” the Psalmist speaks, where he says, “*There were they in great fear,*” or as the Hebrew has it, “*They feared a fear;*” but he immediately

adds, "God is in the generation of the righteous;" and what have they to fear, seeing all that is within them, and all that is without, testify that God is their friend? "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name," says one in the Bible; and he immediately assigns the best of reasons why his soul should be thus employed: all his *iniquities* were forgiven, and all his spiritual diseases were healed—all sense of peril gone—all cause of sorrow removed: "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies." Besides, his soul had renewed her youth "like the eagle's," and, instead of grovelling in the dust, could soar, as on eagle wings, away toward heaven. (Ps. ciii. 1, 5.) Good old Thomas Adams used to say, *faith* is the Christian's logic, and *hope* his rhetoric. Faith perceives what is to be done; hope gives alacrity to the doing of it. Faith guides, advises, rectifies; hope courageously encounters all adversaries. He compared *faith* to a doctor in the schools, and hope to a captain in the wars. Faith discerns the truth; hope fights against impatience, heaviness of spirit, infirmity, dejectedness, and despair! What has a creature thus furnished to fear? I forget much of what he said of *love*, only that its latitude is greater—faith and hope had some restraints and limitations, of course: "*The just shall live by faith*"—an increase of it from day to day is his life. *Love* he compared to the *vine* which God brought out of Egypt, and cast out the heathen to plant it, which covereth the mountains with the shadow of the boughs, while the branches thereof spread unto the seas and the rivers. He compared Christian *love* also to the *sun* in the sky, that throws its comfortable beams upon all, and forbears not to warm the earth that only bears weeds;

and that love extends to God and angels, and down to man, over God's universal earth!

“Happy the heart where graces reign,
Where *love* inspires the breast;
Love, the divinest of the train,
The sovereign of the rest!”

Augustine's spiritual temple pleased me. God builds such a temple on the believer's heart, he said, Faith its Foundation, its walls Hope, and the perfection of its roof Charity! A man, he thought, might go to prayer when he pleases, who carries his chapel in his heart! That *religion* has its *mysteries* is not to be denied. I would doubt its divine origin if it had not, coming, as it professes, from the mind of an invisible, self-existent, and eternal Being. We find it easy to *believe* everything revealed in the Scriptures, so long as our *faith* that it is “*the word of God*” knows no abatement. I believe, with Rupertus of old, that “the mysteries of religion are better understood by *believing*, than believed by the understanding!” We believe many things which we can by no means comprehend. You know too much about the mysteries of *creation* and *science* to require argument upon this subject.

It is pleasant to know there are some things reserved for an explanation in an eternal state. This renders the thoughts of heaven so desirable and so cheering to real Christians. In the mean time we know enough to enable us to shape our course over the sea of life, and gain the heavenly port.

When I was in the city of Hudson on the North River, during a revival of religion, a skeptic freely stated his objec-

tions against Christianity, chiefly because he found things in the system which he could by no means comprehend; therefore he could never bring his reason to embark upon an ocean of mysteries, without knowing the *why* and the *wherefore* of everything; he must be able, he said, to comprehend and explain everything, which he could not in the Christian system. A plain man told him that the *why* and the *wherefore* of serving God, and securing eternal life, were made plain enough, he considered; that whatever in the Bible seemed incomprehensible to reason, that was no reason why the skeptic should neglect to secure eternal life. "Suppose you were far out upon the ocean," continued the good brother, "and you had command of the ship, being, of course, properly educated to navigate that sea. Suppose that, after trying day after day to take soundings, and you still found the vast expanse *unfathomable*, you should then and there declare your purpose to proceed no farther on your voyage, stating to all on board that you never could be 'fool enough' to sail over a sea you could not fathom, and concerning the mysteries of whose bottom you had no information. What would they think of you? Why, that you had already made a fool of yourself!" "Oh! but such a determination I could never come to, so long as my *instruments* of calculation, and sea-room, and other things assured me of safety." "Very true! depth enough for ten thousand keels, an assurance from the sun overhead as to your position, sound planks beneath your feet, and all health and peace on board, why should you trouble yourself about the mysterious abyss over which you are sailing! But how is it that you cannot allow yourself the same latitude in passing over the mysteries of Christianity,

seeing that faith in the doctrines of religion and in the Bible is as necessary as faith in your navigating instruments, and in the *sun*, when navigating the ocean? Besides, no mariner has ever better assurance of a staunch vessel beneath his feet, and of peace on board, than the Christian who has thus embarked his all on board the old ship Zion!" The infidel disappeared, and I saw him no more.

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Well, if you can trust the voice of science, we can also trust the voice of *divine revelation*. If the *promises* in the book of nature, read and understood by philosophers, are reliable, how much more the promises of our God, as recorded in the Bible? Were it not so the *scientific lecturer* would have the advantage of us, I confess. "The book of nature is full of promises," says the philosopher. "And I can prove that nature keeps all her promises," says the lecturer. He then begins to interrogate nature, and receives distinct and unvarying replies. "By a spark, an explosion, an effervescence, or an evolving substance," he proves the certainties of science to be unfailing, and that nature never falters in the fulfilment of her promises!

The more he tests nature by such interrogations, the clearer he demonstrates her reliableness. And thus he proves, to borrow a few ideas from Dr. Chalmers, that nature walks by rule; that she keeps her promises; that her footsteps are steady and reliable; that her motions are persevering and without abatement; that the strictest scrutiny never detects an hair's-breadth deviation. Nor is all this confined to the mere abstract tests of philosophy upon the more solid parts of materialism. The lecturer proves that those elements which

seem to indicate most fickleness are but the evolutions of a mechanism that never changes; that even the fitful agitations of the weather have their law and their principle; that the intensity of every breeze, the number of drops which compose every shower, the formation of every cloud, and all the occurring alternation of storms and sunshine, and all the endless shiftings of temperature, and those tremulous vibrations in the air which philosophical instruments discover but cannot explain—that all those follow each other by a method of succession which, though more intricate, is yet absolute as the mathematical courses of astronomy—showing that the most hidden movements of nature are conducted with a uniformity as rigorous as fate—proving, whether the lecturer confesses it or not, that the God of nature is reliable; and if in the laws imprinted upon the natural world, how much more in those of his revealed word?

And now it occurs to me that some such ideas as these rushed to my assistance last Friday night, when preaching from Matt. xxi. 22: “*And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive.*” A frequent occurrence with me, although my habit is to give credit where credit is due, and when I can quote correctly, which I cannot always do, when borne onward upon a hurricane of divine power! But you may remember I added, if the promises in the Scriptures were not as reliable as those which philosophers claim for those on the page of nature, the scientific lecturer would have all the advantage of us; and *Christianity*, when compared to *experimental science*, would be, to use a figure of Solomon, as *a dead lion* beside *a living dog!* which God enabled me to prove before I left the pulpit was not the case! For

sure as the fire from heaven came down upon the altar on Carmel midst the thousands of Israel, a baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost did descend from God through that promise; and if you did not take to your heels like some, you beheld the amazing results!

That I used strong terms on that occasion I admit, and it was on that very account that I resorted to strong measures, and decisive. I felt warranted in doing so; for in addition to bold language, I had this to strengthen my faith and confidence, that I had tested the promise alone with God, and found it might be relied upon—I did! And therefore said, “*He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear.*” We have here a plain promise of Jesus Christ, and it may be tested here and now, and in a few moments we may, if we will, prove whether his veracity and power are lodged in it, and by a manifestation as real and convincing as outbursting fire from the bosom of a thundercloud! I call for the askings of faith. I plead, I claim that the promise shall be tested *here and now.*” The people knelt, as if *one soul* actuated the mass. There was a solemn pause, a deep silence, broken here and there by a sob. In the course of a few minutes what a change! what scenes! what manifestations! “*unaccounted for,*” indeed, by your principles, but predicted beforehand, and easily accounted for on Christian principles. Could you wonder that one of us exclaimed, in the language of Petrarch:

“Victorious *faith*, to thee belongs the prize!
On earth thy power is felt, and in the circling skies!”

A German made this remark, that he could very well account for the boldness of the prophet Elijah on mount Car-

mel, when he said: “*The God that answereth by fire, let him be God*”—when he called upon God in the hearing and in sight of thousands—called for the fire to descend on the sacrifice upon that altar, and consume it, after twelve barrels of water filled the trench and saturated the wood and the stones; but the fire came down and consumed the *sacrifice and the wood and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench*—the people falling on their faces, and crying out, “*The Lord, he is the God! the Lord, he is the God!*” The German said he accounted for this boldness of Elijah on this principle, that the prophet had tested the veracity of his God in secret, and therefore doubted not the power of faith and prayer in public. You may apply this, if you please, to the scenes of last Friday night; in the mean time, let *faith* blow her trumpet.

“Where *reason* halts and genius sinks in death,
Faith ventures with the Bible in her hand!”

And now hearken to my texts, for we are about to test most reverently, and in faith, the *veracity* of our God in his promises. And if *fire* should come down from heaven, it is not to consume any of you in your sins, but as *rotten wood* your sins. These he will consume, and all your unbelief and hardness, though your heart be as hard as the stones of the altar on Carmel; and to consume also the *dust* of vanity and pride, the *serpent's food*—ay! and to lick up the waters of sorrow around the trench of the altar of every heart from which the *prayer of faith* may ascend.

“*And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God that answereth by fire, let*


*him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken." (1 Kings xviii. 24.) "Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." (Mark xi. 24.)**

* What an amazing manifestation of God's power did we witness a few weeks ago, in the old St. George Methodist Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, in the use of the above texts combined! J. C.

Wilmington, Del., June 5, 1860.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

TO THE SAME—THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

 BUT have you never read that just remark of a distinguished writer, that all arts and sciences abound with difficulties, and that a perfect knowledge of them is not to be attained without considerable labor and application. Theology, sir, is the *first of sciences*, for all others are, or ought to be subservient to it; why then should it be an *exception*? If science has its "*abstrusities*," demanding patience and perseverance to overcome, why should it appear to you "an insuperable objection" (did you not mean obstacle?) that you find it so in the science of Christian theology? With *faith* for your assistant, you may overcome. But as it is the triumph of Christianity to *regenerate the heart*, and make you a *new creature in Christ Jesus*, you had better take this into the account. Jesus tells you that you must "*agonize to enter in at the strait gate*." Your carnal heart is likely to set itself against such repentance—faith—agony; but without it, remember, with all your knowledge of Christianity, you may, in the long run, be nothing more than a *wise devil* through all eternity.

2. Those two or three passages have perplexed wiser heads than thine or mine! and there are yet others more difficult

still! Why should you marvel, seeing the book lays claim to be a *revelation* from God himself? And what are we but creatures of a day! But a little while since, and we thought as much of our little windmills, and water-wheels, and bows and arrows, and other toys, as the monarch does of his crown and sceptre and munitions of war! If we have outgrown our *toys* as we have our *clothes*, it is no reason why we should not be humble. We have not far to look back, when we were learning our A, B, C! If the truth were known to others, as it is to each of ourselves, we have erred in judgment sufficiently often since boyhood, to lead us to think and speak modestly—especially upon a subject like this. I would say, sir, with the immortal Chillingworth, propose to me anything out of the Bible, and require whether I believe it or no; and, seem it never so incomprehensible to human reason, I will subscribe it with hand and heart; as knowing no demonstration can be stronger than this—“*God hath said so, therefore it is true.*” I have long since learned to say of the Bible, with Milman,

“Be thou my star in reason's night,
 Be thou my rock in danger's fright,
 Be thou my guide, 'mid passion's way,
 My moon by night—my sun by day!”

3. Intelligent Christians draw no such conclusions from the *foreknowledge* of God. They admit it, 'of course, nor for a moment deny that, although enthroned in heaven's eternal light and glory, yet earth, air, and sky, and hell's deep gloom—the past, the present, and the future, too—are all laid open to

“His eye, whose instant glance pervades
 Heaven's heights, earth's circle, hell's profoundest shades.”

But they see no reason for imputing the *cause* of an evil to the fact of God having foreseen it. An astronomer's foreknowledge of an eclipse did not *cause* it. "But if God foreknows it, then it cannot but happen." But does that *prove* that his foreseeing it was the cause of its happening? As well lay the blame of the late catastrophe to the foresight of that architect who predicted the fall of the edifice. I have not learned that any one has imputed blame to him.

4. It is difficult, I think, to avoid Dr. Adam Clarke's conclusions, drawn from 1 Sam. xxiii. 11, 12, that there is such a thing as *contingency* in human affairs; that is, God has poised many things between a possibility of being and not being, leaving it to the will of the creature to turn the scale. Read the passage at your leisure. David made two inquiries of the Lord: "*Will Saul come down to Heilah?*" And the Lord said, "*He will come down.*" "*Will the men of Heilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?*" And the Lord said, "*They will deliver thee up.*" But Saul came not down to Heilah; nor did the men of Heilah deliver David into the hand of Saul. And why? Because David escaped from Heilah. Therefore this twofold prediction implied an *if*--that is, a contingency: if David will not escape from Heilah, Saul will come down to Heilah, and the men of Heilah will deliver him into the hand of Saul! This principle of interpretation has a wide application, but I never care to pursue it very far. God foresees, if you continue in unbelief, Satan will come down upon you there, and that your sins will deliver you into his hand, and that he will deliver you to the tormentors. Nevertheless, there is a way of escape. And God asks, "*How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*" Is not this

enough? There is a way of escape—a possibility of escaping; therefore, if you are finally destroyed, your destruction shall be of yourself. All the commands, all the promises, and all the threatenings of God cluster around this centre.

5. It blasphemes both the wisdom and goodness and omniscience of God, to impute our *sufferings* for a sinful course to his "*necessitating* will"—that we must both sin and *suffer* because he has foreseen both. If his *foreknowledge* in any way affected our *free agency*, the matter would be different. Our damnation would not then be of ourselves; nor would it require much argument to show that such a state of things would entirely destroy the basis upon which the rewards and punishments of time and eternity are founded.

6. The Arabs take strong views upon this subject. "The bounty of God" is a favorite theme with them, and "*God has willed it.*" Their resignation to his will, as to a *fate*, seems remarkable; and yet it is said never to paralyze the exertion of an Arab, as it does that of the Turk; hence the reproaches cast by the former against the latter for his apathy and stupidity in ascribing to the will of God that which was merely the result of his own fault or folly are notorious. The Arab sometimes teases the Turk with the story of one who bared his back to the stings of mosquitoes, and then exclaimed, "God has decreed that I should be stung!" Can you not apply the principle to somebody else besides the poor Turk?

7. A plain man, the other day, quite perplexed one of your "wise sinners"—a great *fore-knowing stickler!*—who, when beaten out of other strongholds, took refuge in this—the foreknowledge of God—that should he foresee his damnation, it could not be prevented. How ingenious some men are to find

excuses for their impertinence, and apologies for their spiritual sloth! The sad state of a disabled ship, far out upon the sea, was described—dismasted, leaking badly, water gaining four to six inches an hour—pumps going, water increasing in the hold; a consultation of officers—result, that by the most desperate efforts the ship might be kept afloat a few hours, by which time *relief* might possibly come. But one of the officers objects: “If God foresees that we shall all go to the bottom, why, to the bottom we must go; if, by his foreknowledge, he perceives we shall be lost, then to be lost is our unavoidable doom; therefore, there is no use whatever of struggling against God’s foreknowledge; besides, if he foresees we shall be saved, then saved we must be, whether we contribute anything to it or not.” Another replies: “We have nothing to do with God’s foreknowledge, because we know nothing about it. Our business is, and our duty, to keep the vessel afloat as long as we can. How can we answer to that same God for the loss of our lives, if we sit down supinely, and let our ship go down under our feet? Let us fly to the pumps!” Behold them toiling hour after hour, while the “foreknowledge man” is lounging below, pronouncing them a parcel of fools in trying to change God’s foreknowledge. When, lo! in the hour of extremity, a vessel appears on the horizon! On the wings of the winds she is carried to their relief, and they are all saved from a watery grave. Had all been of the mind of the second officer, they would have undoubtedly gone to the bottom!

The skeptic was considerably perplexed, but made out to say something about *moral action* as differing from the mere management of a ship at sea. “Make out as many nice dis-

tinctions as you like," rejoined the plain brother, "I consider that it would have been *morally wrong* for those sailors to have neglected the means of self-preservation which God had placed within their reach." The skeptic had no more to say, and moved on, but had some better material for *thought*, than he had been accustomed to, I fancy.

8. By the way, sir, have you not read of that terrible storm that overtook a vessel on the Adriatic, and which beat upon her during fourteen days and nights, under a sunless, moonless, and starless sky, till all hope that they should be saved was taken away both from passengers and crew?—and how that an angel from heaven in the night, during the full sweep of the tempest, alighted on that wave-washed deck, and said to one of the passengers, "*Fear not, Paul, for thou must be brought before Cæsar : and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee*"—some *two hundred and threescore and sixteen people* all told. But did that lead Paul to protest against their taking soundings, letting go four anchors out of the stern, lightening the ship by casting the wheat into the sea? But there was the angel's promise, and they toiled on in the height of the storm as if no such promise existed—Paul helping, and venturing, though a prisoner, to put in a word of direction. The angel came down from God out of heaven, who saw "*the end from the beginning*," that they should all be saved—pledged the veracity of an *angel*, and the credit of Paul's veracity to the prediction. All prudential measures were encouraged, while he declared, "*There shall not an hair fall from the head of any you ;*" nor did he say how useless all this bustle, in taking up the anchors, and loosing the rudder-bands, and spreading the mainsail to the wind, seeing the foreseeing


promise of God stands good! Nay, but when the sailors attempted to take the small boat and flee from the ship, leaving the passengers to perish, Paul protested to the centurion and soldiers, saying, "*Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.*" What! and the promise of a foreseeing God to the contrary? Read the result in Acts xxvii.

* * * * *

"Infidel works." I thought as much! I would advise you to neither course—neither sell nor give them away. Do with them as those at Ephesus did with their wicked books—*burn* them, "*before all men*" if you please, but burn or destroy them, that they may do no more injury. (Acts xix. 19.) Make no such compromise with Satan. Now that they can do you no more harm, he wants to get them into hands where injury may be perpetuated; and offers to put money into your pocket if you will but let the books go. No such compromise, my friend! *Burn* them! Have you not read that when the *French Revolution* had brought to light the fatal consequences of Voltaire's writings, some half-scrupulous persons, no longer willing to allow his *fourscore* volumes a place in their library, resolved to get rid of them, and sold them at a low price. Thus, as one remarked, "this measure, though it '*stayed the plague*' in their own houses, caused the infection to spread wider." Burn them, sir! burn them!

CHAPTER XXXIX.

HINTS FOR CERTAIN HEARERS.

 "one of them."—"Woe to the land shadowing with wings," exclaimed one of the prophets. Opinions are of ten but Satan's shadows! He is the spirit that worketh in the "*children of disobedience.*" His *shadow* on the intellect leaves an impression, which resolves itself into an opinion. When Satan wishes to transfer an heretical opinion, he knows well how to do it. Adopting his opinions, you make them your own; once yours, they will attend you as the shadow of your person; when you go, the shadow goes; when you stand or sit, or bow or limp, advance, recede, or stop, so will your shadow.

2. Beware! of making a bridge of your own shadow! Have you never read the fate of him who was drowned by a similar mistake? or of those thoughtless fellows who mistook their united shadows for a bridge, and fell into the river? They were only akin to those who tried to span the gulf of death by infidel opinions, which were but shadows, without any substance of truth, of whom it was said, "They perished catching at their own shadows, and hanging on their own fancy!" which they falsely called faith; faith in all unbelief, it was. The race of such men has not become extinct. Oh! sir, cease

entirely to be one of them! In their consciences, if they have any, they will approve your course. "Believe as Christians do," said three or four professed infidels to a dying companion. "Believe as Christians do; because, if it be false, it can do you no harm; but if it should prove true, you will be a great gainer." The man replied, "I have already taken your advice." He had taken the alarm during his illness, feeling that his sickness was unto death; sought mercy through faith in Christ, and had found it, and was now enjoying that divine peace of mind which true religion can inspire. He was truly happy. These members of the old club, hearing of his dangerous illness, concluded to visit him, and volunteer the advice already noted. The man died well.

3. Far otherwise it was with poor —. The irresistible hand of God was upon him, and there was no escaping. Infidelity had made him daring in sin, and his conscience, now under the command of Heaven, seemed as if laying then all open before him. *Recollections* came crowding upon his soul, which were poor helps in his last grapple with the king of terrors. If he did drop into the fiery lake, it was not with a hard heart or a seared conscience; that is, if one might draw inferences from appearances. But God is judge. The day will declare it. We may find some in paradise we did not expect to meet there; and miss others we had no doubt of hailing there. We cannot say as much of Mr. —. "To justify myself is impossible; to make supplication is unavailable," afford but a slender hope, surely; eyes now rolling in horror or agony, and again, as it were, swimming in death; as if unable to sustain his affliction, as to repair his loss. He must either go into the eternal world unprepared, or reconsider

his avowed principles, and along with it a review of past life. "*The cup of trembling*" was in his hand; but, alas! with the words of Lucifer in Festus, we may drop the curtain:

"And giving bills which no man may decline;
Drafts upon hell one moment after date,
Terrors shall be about ye like a wind;
And fears come down upon ye like a house."

4. The serious remark of one is worthy of record; it was to this effect: that death is only a small drop from "*the cup of trembling*," mingled for the future portion of the soul, reluctant to leave the body. I love to think that God is *merciful*; but in view of the Scriptures, which Jesus declares "*cannot be broken*," one trembles for the fate of a soul departing from the body thus. Ah! sir, infidelity is a poor support in such an hour as this! Allow me to commend for your adoption the prayer of Austin of old, "O Lord, let thy holy scriptures be my pure delights, in which I can neither *deceive* nor be *deceived*." If so, their "*delights*" shall not be wanting in that honest and trying hour, which may come at any time, and must come at one time or other.

5. Ponder Ps. cxix. 11, "*Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee*." And again, 161st verse, "*But my heart standeth in awe of thy word*." He who thus gives "*the word of God*" a place in his heart will never be *awed* by death, nor find death armed with a sting, as did the poor skeptics alluded to. Isaiah xxx. 21 is worthy your attention, "*And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left*." That "*word*" is the voice of God sounding out from the Bible. He designs his word to

be a “*a lamp unto thy feet, a light unto thy path.*” (Ps. cxix. 105.) Mark those two pronouns “*thy,*” for they are significant, showing the *individuality* of the Scriptures—“*thy feet,*” not anybody’s feet or everybody’s feet, but “*a lamp unto thy feet,*” as if you were the only person remaining upon earth to be guided into heaven!

6. The Bible is a teacher as well as a preacher. It is God’s voice we hear there; and sometimes it is as if God were speaking directly to one from the sacred page. The word comes then with a force singularly striking and convincing. It is thus to me, at least. And now, a parting word for your ear alone; it is this: never expect to hear the voice of God to your comfort from the Bible, unless your believing eye is fixed reverently on the Bible, or to the idea of that book in your memory you offer the homage of your heart and the allegiance of your conscience.

* * * * *

To “A FRIEND.”—1. So your “friend A. was disappointed;” no uncommon event among my over-curious hearers. When a boy I was never fond of throwing *feathers!* they strained the arm more than a substance a thousand times their weight. I confess to the same prejudice in preaching. My Master has not sent me into the fields, ripe already unto harvest, for the purpose of picking up a feather here and there, dropped from a wild or tame bird’s wing. No, nor to gather sticks or straws, “*hay, wood, and stubble;*” but the wheat for the garner of the Lord. (Matt. xiii. 30, or Matt. iii. 12.)

2. Perhaps he has never read the story of Myconius, the friend of Luther, how that after his call to the ministry he had a remarkable dream; that he entered a field of grain, and was


ordered by the proprietor to commence reaping. He did so, but found himself greatly attracted by the straw of the wheat, and wasted much of his time and strength in levelling his sickle close to the ground, so as, if possible, to leave little or no *straw* behind. He was ambitious to gather the *straw* as well as the *ears*. While thus engaged a voice spoke to him in the Latin tongue: *Domino meo non opus est stramine modo ariste in horrea colligantur*—"My Master needeth not *straw*; gather but the *ears*, and it shall suffice." Myconius understood the design of the vision, and, I trust, profited by it during all the years of his ministry.

3. *Theorizing* is not my forte. It is well; otherwise, to please a few I might become but a profitless preacher to the many. Those remarks of the excellent Mr. Jay have been cheering to me, and in connection with my own experience and observation have strengthened me in my purpose—to be spiritual and practical in my style. His remarks were, that there seems to be in the public mind an intuitive perception that religion is not mere science or theory, but that it contains much that has to do with men's business and bosoms. There is, continued he, an innate conviction that it is not only something to *know*, but something to *do*. They may not be always willing to do, but still they expect to hear of it, and are dissatisfied if they do not. They are aware that it is a matter which has to do with all *persons, states, and circumstances*. Hence they feel something of surprise, even disgust, with the preacher who deals much in *abstractions* which lie remote from human nature and life. They expect to be told, not only how they should *think*, but how they should *act*. A good *maxim* is more appreciated than any *speculation*.

4. To return to yourself, it would give me pleasure to assist you out of that snare; but you have had some opportunity of knowing how intensely I am engaged, day and night, except the few hours I snatch for sleep. But, blessed be God, that *oblivion* is complete! This is a great work of God, and a great tax upon mind and body—compelled frequently to range over wide fields for information and for illustration, whereby to present *truth* more vividly to the minds of my hearers. Every night presents new phases in the work; characters of all sorts crowd the sanctuary. In various ways, I become acquainted with them, and suit my preaching to their inquiries or circumstances. I am quite a cosmopolite, flying to and fro, and can carry but few books with me; so I have to rely upon the memory of what I have read, when I had a library of my own, and time at my command. My note-books help me. This is all I can say at present. Write me all your heart; and, I dare say, if you will pay particular attention, that in some part of the discourses from night to night you will find fragments that will refer to *yourself*, though others may consider them intended for many more besides.

CHAPTER XL.

TO ANOTHER—THOUGHTS ABOUT BOOKS.

OOKS ! I love their society—books that are books : that reward one well for time and attention. When a pastor, how I revelled in their delightful interchange of thought ! How often in their midst have I realized that sentiment of Landor, that, when we sit down among our *books*, we enjoy a society and privilege we might travel far among living men without finding their equal ! In conversing with them, we raise no jealousy when we converse with one in preference to another ; we give no offence to the most illustrious by *questioning* him as long as we will, and leaving him as abruptly ! Diversity of opinion raises no tumult in our presence ; each interlocutor stands before us, speaks, or is silent, and we adjourn or decide the business at our leisure. Nothing is past which we desire to be present ; and we enjoy by anticipation, somewhat like the power which, I imagine, we shall possess hereafter, of sailing on a wish from world to world !

“ The winter's night and summer's day
Pass imperceptibly away ”

in such society. Blessed be God for the society of books.

2. How necessary, though, they should be *good books*. I

should like to see your library. The character of a man may be known by the *company* he keeps, is an old maxim ; and the same may be said of the *books* he reads ! “*Evil communications corrupt good manners*” is as true of books as of men ! Instead of assisting us to anticipate the period when we shall float as on a wish from world to world, *bad books* may predispose the mind to a very different *antepast* ! Of all books, the Bible is the safest ; and it is so *portable* that one can carry it everywhere. My Bible was seized at the port of Rome by an officer of the Pope, but he handed it back to me again ; whereas, had there been a box of books, they would have been detained. I smiled when I got my Bible back, knowing that it contained whole libraries within itself, and the elements, besides, that would most assuredly one day either purge Popery of its pernicious and destructive errors, or smite it and break it in pieces, and disperse it like the chaff of the summer thrashing-floors which the wind carries away—like what befell the great image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream ! And what companionship we find in that Book of books !—the best and most illustrious persons that ever walked the earth !

3. And your authors “have assisted you on difficult points ;” very well, if in doing so, they did not weaken your respect for the Bible ! “*If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch,*” may be said of all false teachers—*books* as well as men ! Were they guided by the decisions of God’s word, think you, or by some other light ? It used to be an old maxim among mariners, before the compass was known, “If a pilot cannot see the pole-star, it can be no fault in him to steer his course by such stars as do best appear.” Ay ! but he was to assure himself whether the star was not

some transitory meteor, or some false light or other! Carelessness in that respect rendered him culpable and amenable to law. The application is plain; see ye to it!

4. In ancient times mariners had no compass, therefore attention to the polar star was often of vast importance to the navigator, as Dryden somewhere remarks:

"Rude as their ships was navigation then,
No useful compass or meridian known;
Coasting they kept the land within their ken,
And knew no north but when the pole-star shone."

So it was with the world, once, till God gave it the Bible. But we have that book now, and *faith*, like the mariner with his compass, ventures out on the sea of life, fearing no danger, with the Bible in her hand. As the sailor *trusts* his compass, and steers by it, blow high or blow low, by night and by day, thus must every saint, ay, and every repenting sinner, steer by the holy book, if they would ever arrive at the port of eternal peace.

5. When in the city of Limerick, south of Ireland, a while since, in conversation with a sea-captain, an excellent man, and a member of the Wesleyan Church in that city, and still in command of a ship in the American trade: he told me that about twelve years ago he found himself, when nearing the Irish coast, involved in a terrific storm. Neither sun nor moon nor star had been descried from his ship's deck during four days and nights. One night during the gale he went below, the vessel "hanging on the teeth of the gale," under close-reefed main-top-sail. Having left the ship in charge of a careful officer he felt easy in mind, lay down on the cabin floor,

imagining land about forty miles distant, according to his reckoning. A thought struck him to open the Bible before he dropped asleep. It lay within reach of his hand, and he opened upon these words: "*And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south.*" (Acts viii. 26.) A sense of immediate danger took possession of his mind, and exclaiming involuntarily, "*Truth, Lord!*" he sprang on deck. It was then about four o'clock of a winter's morning, and looking up, a star or two was twinkling here and there through the gloomy vault, but the tempest was tremendous. He ordered a man aloft to look out—the waves ran so high and furious there was little chance to see anything from deck. "Look right to leeward," said the captain, apprehending danger from that quarter. In a few moments there was a cry from the rigging, "*Breakers ahead, sir!*" "Where away?" The answer confirmed his singular impression, and he instantly ordered the helmsman to keep her away *south*; the ship obeyed, and barely escaped destruction; and that night they entered the Shannon all well. Thus the Bible, that had been the means of saving his soul from sin and hell, seems to have been the means also of saving him and his crew from a watery grave!

6. It is thus in matters of doctrine: when a man is perplexed by temptation and darkness and skepticism, he may find the true point of his spiritual course, as well as his peril, by consulting the Bible! Let him, in doing so, pay attention to the impression it may make upon his mind, and govern himself accordingly. This little anecdote may be of some use to you. Ponder it. Watch and pray, and steer as the New Testament may direct. From this hour may you never look upon the Bible without those lines occurring to your mind:

“May this blest volume ever lie
 Close to my heart, and near my eye;
 Till life's last hour my soul engage,
 Be this my chosen heritage!”

7. Whether he was a friend or foe to your faith, who perplexed you so on Gen. ii. 17, judge for yourself after pondering the following hints: “*For on the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*”—or as the Hebrew has it, “*dying thou shalt die*”—the same as if God had said, “Thy *body* shall cease to be immortal, and shall gradually tend toward death. Thy soul shall instantly lose its spiritual life, which consists of union and fellowship with me, its Author;—thy soul shall become dead to the life of communion with me, as thy body shall be dead when thy soul has been separated from it. Continuing thus, thy separation from life and peace must be *eternal*, which is the *second death*.” Disobedience followed. Now, had the fruit of that forbidden tree remained untasted, man had never died; and, most likely, neither spiritual, temporal, nor eternal death had ever befallen the family of man. Yet, from all this, the doctrine of *annihilation* can no more be extracted than oil out of flint; no, not by the most forced or strained method of interpretation.

8. “*Earnest objections*,” I admit, have been made by infidels in every age against that plain account of the fall of man in the Book of Genesis; yet I have never met one that was able to propose anything better. “*Alphonso the Wise*,” as he was called, but one called him “*Alphonso the Fool, rather*,” was impious enough to declare that had the Maker of the universe consulted him at the creation, he could have given him hints for the improvement of his plan; thus boasting that had

he been of God's council, many things had been advised and ordered better than they now are. Alas for the royal brains of Alphonso! His own plans needed mending in the government of his country. And what answer could he give his God when standing before his tribunal? "*God is not mocked*" with impunity.

9. The *expulsion* from the garden, and the *sword* of flame at the gate through which the guilty pair passed, and, indeed, the entire destruction of the garden, were all necessary acts of mercy: "*lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever.*" A terrible calamity would that have been! A deathless union between soul and body—an eternal old age, with all the attendant evils now known in the lot of man, afflictions, temptations, sins, sorrows, and sufferings, yet incapable of death! What a horrible state of things! There are *five* prophetic months indicated in Rev. ix. 6, when men shall endure such torments that death in any form would be a boon. "*And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.*" Imagine the *frenzy* during such a state of things! Picture to yourself the state of our world thus circumstanced if but for a thousand years only!—that plaintive cry of Job saluting us in every direction: "*Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures?*"—unwilling to end life with their own hands, but rushing into scenes where death is most likely to meet them—as some who have been known to rush into the battle-field, hoping that a ball from an enemy's gun might do that for them which they had not courage to do for them-

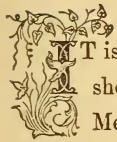
selves! Such "heroes" have performed wonderful exploits on the field of blood and desperation.

Perhaps you have not met with those lines by one of the Latin poets :

"Seeing that long life is both useless and burdensome,
When we can no longer live comfortably, shall we be permitted to die?
Oh! how hard is the condition on which we hold life!
For death is not subjected to the will of man.
To die is sweet to the wretched; but wished-for death flees away.
Yet when it is not desired, it comes with the hastiest strides."

CHAPTER XLI.

THE TRUTH OF GOD DEFENDED.



IT is a long time ago since it was said of Truth, that she seldom appears in public without a *scratched* face ! Men hate her so ! Sometimes, indeed, she comes too near the heel of Error, and gets knocked down for her pains. But her wounds, thank God, are never mortal, nor incurable. Her Lord, who healed the ear of Malchus, is never less kind to Truth, his own representative upon earth. As some poet says, though crushed to earth, she is sure to rise again, for *the eternal years of God are hers !* Error, like the vicious horse, that wounded himself in hitting against a spike, writhes and dies in the midst of its admirers.

2. There is a difference between yonder *old oak* on the heights, and that *willow* on the verge of the swamp. The oak contends with the furious blast, and roots itself deeper by the fray. It is its nature to do so ; and the soil on which it grows, and where it has been so long nourished, supports it in the conflict. But the willow—it is its nature to *yield*—a good illustration of the presence or absence of principle. I remember reading of a celebrated English statesman, who contrived to hold office both under the government of Queen Mary the Papist, and Queen Elizabeth the Protestant. One

ventured to ask him how he was able to keep place under the reigns of two such opposite sovereigns. "By always imitating the *willow* instead of the oak," was the reply—no very difficult matter to a man who had no *conscience*!

3. One *encounter* prepares one in my position for another; as the brindled *lion* prepared David to encounter the *bear*, which came on a similar errand against his affrighted flock. Successfully encountering these, and recognizing the hand of God in the victory and deliverance, he was prepared, when the occasion served, to measure strength with Goliath of the Philistines, in the valley of Elah! A conqueror there, gave assurance of victory at the head of an army—till, in after-life, we hear him exclaim, "*Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight!—my goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me! For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall; a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.*" One encounter prepared him for another. Samson's conflict with the young lion of the thicket nerved him to assail a forest of Philistines. "There is much of this discipline in the history of every successful minister of Jesus Christ!

4. But I would not be misunderstood. There is but little use to behave like the *oak*, when the conduct of the yielding *willow* will serve as good a purpose. Such *ludicrousness* I have seen in my time. It never struck me as a mark of a *well-balanced* mind, much less of true greatness of character; although piety might be associated with it. In matters pertaining to conscience, and the high authority of God—when the mind grasps a "*Thus saith the Lord,*" as the roots of a

great tree, some vast stone or rock beneath the surface—then, let the character concerned resemble the oak on the hills; but in things *non-essential*, where the will and authority of God receive no dishonor, it is well to resemble the yieldingness and gentleness of the *willow*! This is all I have to say upon this subject; only this let me say of the *cannonading* in question, I am used to it! it was called "*paper shot*" by one of the old writers, with a startling array of the pikes of evil tongues. "*God and my rights!*" And "*the word of the Lord endureth for ever,*" whatever may become of me! Christ reigns! Hallelujah!

5. And now for another point: hearken! The Jews had their *traditions*, so have the Roman Catholics; each would have us believe them to be "unwritten verities." Skeptics, of a moderate caste, are much inclined to make similar claims; but they find intelligent and conscientious Protestants tough subjects to grapple with. Our *verities* are found in the *written* word of God. We are very stubborn upon this point, we assure you, sir! Every creature after its own nature. What the Bible is to you and your fellows, is not so to myself and companions. We never expect to see a fly suck honey out of a flower like the bee! Nevertheless, the fly may be quite as active as the bee, in its way! Skeptical natures are quite active just now. The warm atmosphere of a genuine revival stirs them into activity. Flies and bees do not stir round much in cold weather!

6. For *medical men* and their *students* I have a high respect, of course; but a word for the ear of one: Persons in your profession are at liberty to make improvement in the *materia medica*. They may discard old systems of practice,

and adopt and invent new ones, with more or less advantage—*risk*, perhaps, to poor humanity. They may take liberties with *prescriptions*, altogether at variance with standard authorities. Not so in theology; our most learned doctors of divinity must receive it and teach it as it is revealed in the New Testament. Physicians may add fresh discoveries to the science of their art, gems to the diadem of medicine, but the divine Author of Christianity has left no *vacancies* in the diadem of religion, to be supplied by some yet undiscovered doctrines. The *truths* of Christianity are as permanent as the globes of the firmament. Those that were known and believed in the *first* century, are precisely the same as those taught and received in the nineteenth. As well attempt the creation of a new star in the vortex of space as to espy some new essential doctrine in the Holy Scriptures!

7. Another point I approach with delicacy and tenderness. Has one present never read in the Book of Psalms, "*Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them;*" that is, be a stumbling-block to them, to cause them to fall, or to stumble them out of the way. He that would promote a revival must learn to step over such things, and not trip upon them; nor should he be thin-skinned either, nor over-nice about circumstances, if so be the work of God advances in power. A bird sang sweetly the other morning in the midst of thorns; and so did a nightingale with a thorn at its breast.

8. After one has been looking at the sun for a while, if the eyes are strong enough to bear it, things below are greatly bedimmed. It is so especially when the eyes of the soul have been looking steadily at "the *Sun of Righteousness*," or at the

Bible, which one called "the *sun of revelation*." The thought might be applied to certain positions in life; wealth and station are too dazzling, unless the eye has been long directed to heavenward. There are certain doctrines and points of Christian experience which are quite beyond the ken of some minds, whatever be their positions in life; like the stars, they are much above them every way. When an individual talks so *confusedly* regarding his own *soul*, of which he ought to have some experience or acquaintance from day to day, it is not to be expected he can reason clearly regarding "*Christ in you the hope of glory*," or of the human soul being "*an habitation of God through the Spirit*," of which he has no experience. To reason correctly about anything, a man should know something of that about which he would reason. "I know what I would not have, but I do not know what I would have," said Oliver Cromwell, when finding fault with the government of England under Charles I. He won something more than a smile, or a titter, after his views had become defined and enlarged! Credit for *wisdom* has often been betrayed by *words*. Some hold respect for wisdom no longer than they hold their peace. Even *children* are quick to *detect*, although in other things much imposed upon by appearances. Circumstances lately have reminded me of a certain courtier in the retinue of Alexander the Great, who paid a visit to the studio of Apelles, the celebrated painter, and was received with the consideration due to his rank. This, it appears, excited his vanity and talkativeness, which unhappily sallied forth upon the fine art in question, exposing his ignorance in a variety of questions and criticisms. Apelles interrupted him at length, in an undertone: "Do you see those boys that are grinding my col-

ors? While you were silent they admired you, dazzled with the splendor of the purple and gold with which your habit glitters. But ever since you began to talk about what you do not understand, they have done nothing but laugh at you!" The courtier made his exit. Having said thus much, perhaps it would be as well to dismiss the subject. I have known persons who in other matters seemed to possess much intelligence and sagacity, but who appeared to great disadvantage when invading the territories of religion; or in dictating in matters of doctrine and experience, which they had not thoroughly investigated. I would by no means discourage religious inquiry, when conducted as an inquiry; but when dogmatical decisions precede investigation, I deplore it—sometimes resist it with more energy and plainness than is agreeable to the parties. A man quite forgets himself when he says of a plain declaration of Scripture, "How can this be? I cannot believe it, because it is incomprehensible." Were he present on any Sabbath afternoon, in any one of the Bible classes of the school belonging to this church, during the discussion of some Scripture topic, he would be surprised how well such mysteries are understood—I mean by very young persons; how much light they are capable of throwing upon the declarations of God's word; persons of whom he would expect but little information in passing them on the street, or meeting them in company.

What reply would he venture, after hearing a mere youth, in a voice and manner of convincing sincerity, discuss the possibility of the Holy Spirit of God occupying the heart of every believer as his habitation, thus: "Our *superintendent* is one, and his *voice* is one; yet that one voice enters the ear of every one of the hundreds present, and occupies every attentive

mind ; by which each at the same moment is made acquainted with his mind, and partakes, may be, of his emotions. This is a great mystery to us ; and yet we know it to be a fact. Why, then, may not *believers* have a similar verification of the Holy Spirit in the *habitations of their hearts*? Again : the natural sun is one, but his beams are many ; yet if we place a *mirror* before him, his one distinct warm *image* is made to appear instantly therein. Let there be a million of mirrors, or *ten hundred millions of mirrors*, one for every person now upon the earth, and it would be just the same—a warm, well-defined image of the sun would appear in every one of these mirrors. But why may not the Spirit of God, though one, be able also to appear in the heart of *one*, or a million, or ten hundred millions of believers, at the same moment? Or can the sun, which is but a creature, or creation of God, do more than his Creator? even that Divine Spirit, which we learn in the beginning of the creation ‘*moved upon the face of the waters.*’ God is one, and his *voice* is one, yet when that voice from Sinai entered the ears of Moses, it entered at the same moment the ears of two millions of people who surrounded him.” Would my friend venture a reply before that school next Lord’s day? Let him recall the story of Alexander’s courtier and the painter’s boys!

9. One remark more ; and let those whom it may concern listen. When *absurdities* run into heaven-insulting *blasphemies*, equal to that *chain-shot* which it was said one hurled upward, as if he thought to make the windows of heaven shake ; why, then, like Hezekiah of old, whom Rabshakeh sent to blaspheme God, we may fall to our prayers, and humble ourselves before insulted majesty.

10. But in parting, let me drop this word in your ear : it

was said of the Sodomites their eyes were full of *uncleanness*, and they were smitten with *blindness*; they burned with *lust*, and God burned them with *fire*; they sinned against nature, and, against the course of nature, God *rained* on them, but it was a rain of fire and brimstone from heaven. A strange punishment, sirs, is decreed for those who strangely sin, and “*who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness.*” We read in Revelation how that the men who blasphemed God, afterward “*gnawed their tongues for pain.*” (Rev. xvi. 9, 10.) The member that *sinned, suffered.* Those two questions of Job are still receiving their respective answers: “*Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?*” So it has been, is, and ever shall be, till all finally impenitent sinners become as chaff, stubble, and tares, and the sentence goes forth, “*Gather, bind, and burn.*” May God prepare us all for that day, and not Satan! Amen!

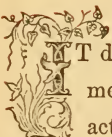
11. Dives complains bitterly in hell about his torment; but the member for which he craved alleviation most was his tongue. “*Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my TONGUE, for I am tormented in this flame.*” The member that sinned most, perhaps, suffered the keenest *anguish*. Not the tongue of his body of course, that had received a decent burial, but its counterpart, the tongue of the soul, that which speaks within, before the tongue of the body stirs. Man is a *compound* being of body and soul, a duplicate in more senses than one. In hell he had eyes by which he could look up, and tongue to speak. A terrible hour it will be to Dives and to all the wicked when both the tongues of body and soul begin to suffer the pains of hell-fire together. Ah! sirs, men little know what they say, when they proudly boast, “*With*

our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?" (Ps. xii. 4.) No sentiments more prevalent in our day! The Psalmist had a deep meaning couched in those inquiries: "What shall be given unto thee, or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper." And a deeper meaning yet did Jesus Christ couch in that awful declaration: "But I say unto you, That every idle word that man shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned." Hear that, all ye who count *words* for nothing! Let me repeat the declaration again, "But I say unto you, That," etc. See how your eternal justification, or condemnation—your *eternity* depends on them! Will you not after this have some care upon your words, and a bridle on your tongues?

12. The prophet Nahum tells us that sinners are but *stubble* laid out in the sun to dry, that they may burn the readier. (Nahum i. 10.) In Rev. xiv. 18, we hear an angel uttering the *vintage cry* against the *vine* of wickedness: "Thrust in thy sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." And it was done, and they were cast into "the great wine-press of the wrath of God." Mark this—the same sun that dries the *stubble* for the fire, ripens the *grapes* for the wine-press. Sinners who sit under truth, if not saved by the Gospel, dry or ripen fast for hell. No *stubble* dries so fast as that which grows in Gospel fields, which Satan has either beheaded of all belief, or so rubbed that the place of *ears* is grainless; and no branch of the vine of wickedness or skepticism ripens faster in its fruit than that which shoots over the walls of Christian congregations.

CHAPTER XLII.

TO — : IMPATIENCE.

T depends unto whom the *Spirit* of God may send the message or the warning. We must distinguish character. "*Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit,*" is an injunction of Scripture. But a caution is previously given, as if the *Spirit* desired us to mark the *priority* of its importance: "*Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him*" (Prov. xxvi. 4, 5)—*like unto him* in spirit and temper, allowing your zeal for the right to degenerate into anger or impatience or vulgarity. There is a hidden meaning, I have thought, couched in that hint of the apostle in Ephes. vi. 12: "*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood*"—as we may think we do when contending with sinners—that they are but men, when they are *more*, the devil being in them to help them to wrestle with us; so that "*we wrestle not with flesh and blood*" alone, but with the devil therein. A mighty argument with me to have "*on the whole armor of God*"—for "*the wiles of the devil,*" in flesh and blood, are beyond all that *wrestlers* ever experienced in the Grecian arena.

2. *Impatience* is a bad companion in the pulpit, and should never appear there. So far as I know my own heart, I felt none of it on that occasion; but strong and burning words of

truth were given me! It is not unusual that such are considered, by some, as *marks* of impatience. In the days of Baxter it was even so, as now. That holy man complained: "If a minister deal plainly with you, you say he *rails*; and if he speak gently or coldly, you either go *asleep* under what he says, or are little more affected than the seats you sit upon." And thus it is to the present day.

3. When one is "*grieved in spirit*" by the hardness and unbelief of some, to say nothing of their *impertinence*, there is a liability of saying too much, or too strongly, and with more emotion than some phlegmatic temperaments would consider becoming. Paul exclaimed, "*Who is sufficient for these things?*" when he found that the word preached had become a *savor of death unto death* to some, though a savor of life unto life to others. That I have detected something like impatience in my own spirit, under sore trial, I will not deny, and have had to mourn over it, and humble myself before God—although it is hard sometimes to distinguish between a *temptation* to impatience, and impatience itself. In either case it is a matter of *feeling*, and so also is the state of being "*grieved in spirit*"—yet that may exist without any *impatience of spirit*. (Mark iii. 5.) However, at such times, to be on the safe side, judgment has gone against myself.

Whether mistaken or not, I have found it good to imitate God's people, of whom it was said in ancient times that, when nature rose against the hard usage received from their persecutors, they soon *clubbed* it down, and reasoned themselves patient, like David, and prayed down their distempers like Paul! With the spirit and actions of some leading men in *Conference**

* The British Wesleyan Conference.

on one hand, and the temper of awakened sinners on the other, no small degree of patient grace and faith are needed.

4. Aristotle, though a pagan, yields the point, that of the twain, it is better to *suffer the greatest wrong than to do the least*. That advice of one is good indeed for the present times—I receive it as such: “You need patience now at every turn; it is like *bread and salt*, which, most likely, you cannot make a good meal without. *Patience!* put it on as your *cloak*, to keep off all storms; as a *helmet*, to bear off all blows; carry it as a *paring-knife*, to cut the cross less and less till it come to nothing. (Luke xxi. 19.) Resemble the ancient Christians, who, when asked by their persecutors what great miracle Jesus Christ had done for them, replied this: ‘That we are not moved by the scorn and cruelties you cast upon us.’ Singular things are expected of those who have received singular grace and mercy—they must go above others, and have their feet where other men’s heads are!” What think you of this advice, my friend? With every sinner saved by grace, I can say, God, even my own God, and thine, has shown me, even me, all long-suffering and mercy, and he expects me to show the same to others; and if in these respects he has shown *singular grace* toward me, should I not, in *forbearance* at least, and *patience*, be head and shoulders above many others.

5. In scenes like these we study men and devils too. The same blow from truth that wounds the sinner does not leave the tempter unscathed. When Satan receives a stab he becomes mad and roars. He laughs in sinners when he is tickled by pulpit wit and drollery, and the preacher would

“Court a grin when he should win a soul.”

If “*the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience*” was

ever tickled from this pulpit, he acts as if in despair of ever enjoying that luxury again! A *thief* does not like to be deprived of his booty, but he likes it worse if he has received a *wound* in trying to conceal it.

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But have you never seen the ancient *emblem* which represents “a *thoughtful thoughtless* man” offering *straw* to a dog and a *bone* to the ass! There is much thought wasted in the pulpit by its *inappropriateness* to the character of the congregation—a cause of much *unfruitfulness*. The opposite course requires *courage*. It is a terrible disaster, in the estimation of some divines, when they learn that the plain-dealing of some conscientious preacher has caused some rich man and his family to vacate their pew, or when his congregation has become thin from the same cause. They would not risk it for a good deal. Yet such a preacher may be dearer than ever to Heaven; and if he have but courage to persevere, in the long run he will be no loser. God will see to that.

The old maxim, “Fair and softly goes far,” prevails widely in this age; and the old politician’s motto also, “*The warm side of the hedge is the better part of prudence.*” If warmth in religion be the preacher’s application of it, it is well enough; but if worldly advantage or spiritual sloth, and an avoidance of the storm that is sure to beat against *the aggressive side of the hedge* be the end, then the warm side of the hedge is *treasonous* ground; bad, as a good man once observed, as to break a hedge of God’s commandment, so he may shun a piece of troublesome way. This is one reason why Providence often commissions some personal or family trouble to invade that snug and warm side of the hedge.

Solomon says, "*The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.*" But that looks to some, when God shows it them, to be the way of starvation and death! "God or your fears," says the Spirit. "God!" says the faithful soul. "The way of life is above to the wise," says God. "I will walk in it," says the consecrated soul. "What! though you meet a lion in the way?" "Yes! though I meet a lion in the way, or a dozen of them, Lord!" Thus, sir, such an one goes a higher way to work, not only to reach the summit of true godliness, but usefulness. Aware that more than a common stint is required of him, he will not stick at doing what others will not or cannot—by way of preaching the whole truth of God, and in such a manner as to come in actual collision with the sins that may be eating the heart out of the church and blighting the heritage of God.

No pique whatever against "rich men and wealthy families," nor should they suspect, without cause, anything of the sort. The Psalmist speaks of *mercy* and *truth* meeting together, and *righteousness* and *peace* kissing each other. But, sir, when *prosperity* and *pride* meet together, and *wealth* and *wickedness* have kissed each other—when souls redeemed by the blood of Christ are carried up by Satan and these, as he once did our Lord, to the pinnacle, from thence to cast them down headlong upon the burning pavements of hell—silence on the preacher's part would be sufficient to awake the abhorrence and exclamations of heaven! What thinkest thou? "But prudence—prudence in dealing with them." I know it; and yet there lies the peril of touching them so tenderly and softly that the preacher might as well not touch them at all! He must preach so as to make them both *see* and *feel* their danger.

There was something abrupt and terrifying in the *peroration*, or application, may be, to some—yet, when rightly understood, what was there so very objectionable in it? What had sincere Christians to fear? Let us see how it looks! Was it not after this manner? Oh! that, as God once allowed Satan the use of a whirlwind to blow down the house where Job's children were feasting, that he would lend me a whirlwind—that he would make my voice a whirlwind to smite the four corners of the houses of sinful amusements and vanities—to break down and uproot all evil examples and hindrances to the Gospel of Christ. Such a whirlwind, my God! as not a soul of them may escape to Satan; such a whirlwind, ay, equal to that which swept away and carried off Elijah to the skies—to sweep every soul out of satanic influence, clear into the extended arms of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! Amen! And my heart still says Amen, as earnestly as ever!

We live in a world of peril. And when one preaches once, it is not certain we may ever preach again. To close one's ministry and life with such sincere utterances, is not to be deprecated; the occasion would be worthy of them, and they worthy of the occasion. When one addresses an audience, there is no certainty we shall ever address them all again. Ah! sir, how many, during the last quarter of a century, have heard this voice of mine for the last time, and retired to die!

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But have you never read that couplet which describes

“Impassioned logic which outran
The hearer in its fiery course!”

Nothing against your critique, only that the subject thereof

feels himself very *unworthy*. It reminded me of the reply of Charles V., after hearing a speech from one of his councillors that tended to his commendation: "The orator has only taught me what I *ought to be*, and not what I *have been*." There was much to humble the spirit in retrospection, after the effort to which you refer. This cup is preferred to my lips oftener than many suppose;—some medicines are *curative* and others *preventive* in their operation! There is more distinction between *talent* and *genius*, in their operations, than you seem to suppose. Poets, I allow, are not at all times reliable authorities, but one of them, I remember, ascribes to talent the power of *convincing* but to genius that of *exciting*! Talent he considered the offspring of the judgment, and the taskmaster of reason, which reconciles its *pinion* to the earth. He compared its operations to sunshine on a cultured soil, ripening the fruit by slow degrees. But genius, as the unsettler of the mind's desires, and discontented till earth be left behind, he compares to "an iris of the skies"—

"*Genius*, the sudden iris of the skies,
 On cloud itself reflects its wondrous dyes;
 And to the earth, in tears and glory given,
 Clasps in its airy arch the pomp of heaven!
 Talent gives all that vulgar critics need—
 From its plain hornbook learn the dull to read;
 Genius, the Pythian of the beautiful,
 Leaves its large truths a riddle to the dull—
 From eyes profane a veil the Isis screens,
 And fools on fools still ask 'what Hamlet means?'"

Both are the gift of God, and should be used for his glory and the good of man. "Lord, thy pound hath gained ten

pounds,” saith he in the parable. (Luke xix 16.) “*Thy pound,*” not *my* pound! As such he traded with it, and as such returned it with increase, and received his great reward. A *grand idea* here! A noble *preservative* against the prostitution of talents! The results would have been more glorious on the occasion in question, had not some professors got frightened and ceased to pray, and to stay up my hands, wishing it were over! Aaron and Hur stayed up the hands of Moses, one on the one side, and the other on the other side, until the going down of the sun, during the great battle in the desert of Rephidim. However, God made us victorious; and this first great victory, like that to Israel, inspired our spiritual troops with great confidence. That victory of Rephidim was the forerunner of a succession of victories to Israel; and so may this, of which we speak, here in this desert of formality and sin. Amen!

CHAPTER XLIII.

TO — : A STIR IN THE CAMP OF UNBELIEF.



HERE is no cause of fear. We can lose nothing by all this. What means it? Have they been asleep hitherto under our batteries? Have the proper cannon been wrongly directed, or dismantled, or what? Depend upon it they are thoroughly aroused. If Satan has been stirred, we may infer it is to defend that which is endangered. Who can doubt it? Look around at the trophies of the onset. And some of these have themselves mounted no mean ordnance against the very ramparts behind which they were so lately intrenched! It is clear any softer method of address could have effected but little. I believe with him who says, "If there is one doctrine of the Holy Scriptures which finds in the present day its tangible confirmation, it is that of the existence of a *ruler of darkness*, and of a kingdom of infernal powers. A shower of fire has swept over us, and the shield-bearers and apostles of unbelief shoot up from the earth, like the fungus, in a night. An infernal spark now burns in skepticism. *Unbelief* is now no longer the blind bantling of a heart ensnared and deluded by the spirit of this world; but the light-shunning offspring of a wicked and rebellious will. *Phenomena*, such as those which meet us in the present day, were never before seen in the world in such anti-Christian atrocity and massiveness. There is peril

to the unsettled everywhere. He who is but halfway in this mystery of iniquity, may finish his course ere the month is out in total apostasy from Christian truth. I only echo the sentiments of him who said, he who reaches the spirit of the times only the tip of his finger, may rest assured that soon his whole hand will be taken." Jesus reigns. That is our comfort. I like to repeat these lines :

"Hell weaving snares a thousand ways,
Finds mercy central in the maze."

It would require more time than I have at command to explain circumstances. The onset was severe, and the material of thought and language not altogether in good taste, perhaps; a fault to which extemporaneous speaking is more or less liable, especially in the ardor and excitement of some occasions—and when the *soul* is fully up to the mark of fearless truth—when one is apt to rely more on that than upon wisdom or good taste in the selection of words and figures. The sting of the remarks lay in their truthfulness. Let us review a little. The comparison of infidels to spiders eviscerating themselves in weaving sophistical webs to catch unwary souls; and others trying all conclusions—beating their own brains, and the drivellings of dead men's brains—searching Satan's skull, were it possible, and listening at the very gates of hell for new designs and forms of blasphemous opposition of the religion of Jesus—drinking deep, besides, of "the cup of devils," for strength to carry the ball at their foot to greater lengths—till God has jerked them back to their shame, and made greater fools of some of them than they thought to have made of his servants;—these figures were strong, but

how far did they overreach the facts of the case? Also, that it was said of one under the power of deep melancholy, that he could not tell whether he was a *beast* or a *man*. But these infidel natures around us have ascertained that they are nothing more than beasts, but, unlike other animals, make merry over the discovery—merry over that which is a melancholy idea to every sensible intellect. And if the truth were known, these renegadoes from truth and righteousness have little else to make merry over than their own melancholy, and the annoyance they give Christians.

“But was there not something more?” Why, yes! that the old satirists called melancholy “*the devil’s bath*,” but some people grow quite merry in the bath! I heard an ass bray a few days since, and he really seemed inclined to be merry, perhaps because one of his little ones had kicked up his heels and whisked his tail, as if pleased with the braying! Nor shall I readily forget the saying of one, that a melancholy person tires the physician, grieves the minister, wounds relations, makes sport for devils, and converts the soul into an ass for Satan to ride upon! All infidels are melancholy asses! It cannot be otherwise. What is there in infidelity to make any man merry? For ever *nothing*, or for ever *miserable*! it would require the power of “*the laughing gas*” every moment, to maintain constant merriment with *two such ideas* knocking at the door of the heart for admittance. That was a great famine in Samaria, when an *ass’s head* was sold for *fourscore pieces of silver*. It would require a *greater famine of the word of God*, before the heads of such asses, or the *product* thereof, would fetch as much! In the present state of the spiritual mart there is no demand for them, except

by such as have no taste for better things; and who, poor creatures, continuing as they are, have little prospect of any more honor at their burial, from angels in heaven, and good men in this neighborhood, than what was accorded to Jehoiakim of old (Jeremiah xxii. 19): "*He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.*" My task is a thankless one, I admit; but then, is it not written in our Bible, "*If thou meet thine enemy's ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back again.*" (Exodus xxiii. 4.) There! my friend, have I made the matter better or worse? Or, are you disposed to compare me to him who, attempting an apology for his profanity, swore again while doing it.

It may not be amiss to remind you that the patriarch Jacob did not scruple to compare Issachar to a strong *ass* couching down between two burdens! If time did but permit, I could draw a very strong comparison between Issachar and some of your neighbors. But I forbear. This is enough for this time. If they fancy anything more of the same style, perhaps it may be forthcoming! A pious man justly observed—and the remark may be of some use to such—that those who have jested most at orthodox sentiments, have by a just series of consequences been given up to believe the most unaccountable things that were ever circulated among mankind; and I have observed, he added, that those who affect to sneer at *creeds*, have always one of their own: every man believes something; and he who deviates most from *the testimony* which is the standard of religious truth, lives in the belief of those sentiments which believers have a right to despise. The application is so plain, I need add nothing further.

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It is the joy of my heart to assist sincere inquirers after truth, although sympathy for those who are wilfully in error runs rather low with me at present. That was a wise saying of one a long while ago, that when men once step over the pale of truth, they know not *when* or *where* they shall stop, but run on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. I have seen the truth of this exemplified in the history of more than one professor of religion. The "sentiment" of Mr. — has "a basis," may be, equal to what a *wit* assigned it, "The cobweb surface of a walking dream!" A perilous basis for that immortal spirit of his. It was said of one that he wrote out wild schemes with the mad finger of his imagination, and wiped them out hastily with the hand of a yet blushing conscience; but his peace of mind was gone, nor did he cease to wander on into deeper darkness. Gospel peace your *neighbor* professes not. How could he? And how can conscience blush when "reason" has become the high-priest of imagination!

So long as it is written, "*To you therefore which believe, he is precious;*" the friends of Jesus need never fail to have the witness in themselves. Calvary and Tabor have both their peculiar attractions for me. In the *transfiguration*, I find curiosity and adoration struggling for the mastery. But in the scene of the *crucifixion*, *adoration* and *sympathy*, like John and the mother of Jesus, on Calvary, are in unity. Olivet, and its ascending Lord!—in that scene my faith receives a glorious confirmation, as regards immortality. There was a voice from the cloud over Tabor, "*This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased;*" and there were voices upon Olivet after Jesus had passed from human sight among the clouds, from the pure lips of angels in white apparel, announcing the certainty

of his return to earth again. These affect me; but not as the voice that sounds through darkness on the mount of suffering, "*My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?*" It melts my heart, it overpowers my soul. It matters not whether he meant *forsaken* me, or *forgotten* me, or to *what* or to *whom* hast thou given me up—my soul abandons itself to one idea, "*My Lord, my love is crucified.*" Room for him in my heart! ay! as a good man exclaimed, "Though half the inhabitants of my soul must turn out to make room for him!" *Emotion* may subside, but the *desire of my heart* never—that the love of Jesus to me, and mine to him, may be lasting as existence—interwoven with every thought, passion, and sensation of my being, and in extent to eternity! The time was when Mr. — felt the same; when he exclaimed, "O Jesus, help me to hide myself in thy wounded side, and there may I find safety! Wash me in thy streaming blood, and there may I be clean!" Alas! alas! And can he now trample under foot the memory of the Son of God, and cast contempt on that blood in which he once trusted! Let him read, and tremble while he reads, Hebrews x. 26–31. If the *justice* of God was honored in those tortures, and in that exquisite anguish of his dearly beloved Son, even unto death—let him be assured that the same divine justice will yet vindicate and honor itself in a terrible manner, upon him who despises or neglects such an atonement. So sure as the hand of God clothed the sun in mourning, while his dearly beloved Son was bleeding to death on the cross for the sins of the world, so sure will the hand of eternal justice clothe, eventually, that soul in eternal mourning, living and dying in contempt of the scenes of Calvary.

Thus much I am at liberty to say. May it prove an *anti-*

dote against corruption. Such fearful changes do not indicate a strength of mind necessary for a leader. The man is far from rest and happiness. *Bravado* is no mark of the strength after which you seek. There are various methods of sustaining *courage*, both in self and others. *Heroism*, so called, has often trembled upon his legs, while stirring and nerving others for the conflict!

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That was a fine remark of one, that "a seeking after *truth* belongs to human nature, and is wont to be the last feature of it that perishes." Would that your "friend" were disposed as he should, to make room for it in his heart, nor longer keep it standing out of doors! for it is nigh unto him, and has been so for years, although he has taken as wide a circuit to find it as Milton's Satan to reach Eden! His heart, however, must be dispossessed of that viperous brood of doubts, before truth will consent to become a permanent inmate of his soul!

Marvel not, if under some circumstances, a man may inquire with Pontius Pilate, "*What is truth,*" all his life, without receiving a satisfactory reply: this is the destiny of — I fear. Democritus exclaimed, centuries ago, "*Truth* lies hid in a pit that has no bottom!" The truth after which he seeks, is bottomed on the word of God—"Thus saith the Lord." Search for it elsewhere, and he will be forced to a similar exclamation, that truth lies hid in a pit that has no bottom! The pit in which he searches for truth contains it not—the pit of *error*, which connects, farther down, with "*the bottomless pit*;" although I would not vouch that he shall not find truth even in the latter pit. That was a tremendous blow given to one by an unknown poet:

“What is hell ?

’Tis nothing but full knowledge of the truth ;
When truth resisted long, is sworn our foe,
And calls eternity to do her right !”

It was the saying of a good man, now with God, that the devil blindfolds many, and they never lose the bandage till in hell ; that many are playing *blind-man’s buff* with Satan ; and, as those who engage in that play get many a knock and blow, if not *bruises*, it is so with the spiritually blind. Those who reject or neglect the Scriptures are easily blinded. God permits it judicially as a punishment. A blind man may stumble upon the gem he is seeking, but he is more likely to miss it. “*If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness,*” says Jesus Christ.

It is written—“*Thy counsels are faithfulness and truth.*” Well would it be for the world if of all counsels we might say the same ! Where the Scriptures have no voice, it becomes us to be silent. “When they have no *tongue*, we need have no *ears*,” said a pious man. An angel from heaven, when speaking with Daniel, could only say, “*I will show thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth.*” Such a restriction is yet more befitting for us mortals here below.

It is also written, “*They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.*” It is as true of the pit of error as the pit of the grave. Your friend may depend upon it, if he leave the Scriptures in search of truth, he will evermore find himself searching for it in a *pit that has no bottom* ; continuing the search, he may sink so deep into that pit as never to find his way back into the light of the Gospel day. There was more excuse for Socrates than for him, for that ancient sage had no in-

spired Scriptures to consult, and yet he was humble enough to confess, "This is one thing I know, that I know nothing." Would that he had something of his humility. Far back in time we read of one who said, "Neither know I this yet, that I know nothing!" and yet another, "I am not ignorant that I am ignorant!" These worthies have one *successor* in the nineteenth century, you perceive!

"Light to light and dark to dark,
Kindred natures thus agree!"

As to yourself, when you search the Scriptures for truth as for a hidden treasure, you are likely to find it. When you approach the Bible, saying, with an eminent person in Scotland,* "*Gift of our heavenly Father, dying legacy of an incarnate Son, revelation of a kind and winning Spirit! love shines on thy every page, and in thy very name thy generous mercy is proclaimed—Gospel, glad tidings, good tidings of good!*" Reverence for the word of God always links itself with *prayer* to the Author of the word. Luther observed that he profited more in the knowledge of the Scriptures by prayer in a short space than by study in a longer. The book was sealed with *seven seals*, till John fell a *weeping*, which brought a voice down from heaven, saying, "*Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof.*" Why did he weep so? Because he apprehended that, had the book remained closed, the church and the world would have suffered a great loss. Prayer accompanied those tears, no doubt. When you properly understand the great loss it will be to you to have the book a sealed book to you, tears may be on your cheeks

* Dr. Guthrie.

also! Tears are great orators in the estimation of Heaven. "Weep not," has been spoken to many a trembling seeker of light and salvation! Prayers and tears and earnest cries accompanied the giving of the Scriptures by inspiration; and who more than Paul? "*I wrote to you with many tears,*" he says in one place. And what epistle did he begin or end without *prayer*? Search the Scriptures in a similar spirit, and you shall find wonderful things in His law. In the mean time, let not our "loud praying" stumble you farther from the truth, and into such queries as, "Whether God hears prayer at all, or whether by implication He is not very far off;" for that is not the prevailing idea, but rather a result of zeal and earnestness. *Distance* would be a disturbing notion, for none of our voices sound much beyond the church premises. "Distances," such as your queries would contemplate, the voice of a *cannon* would be as ineffectual to reach as a *whisper* from human lips. We know it is all the same for a divine hearing whether we pray in a loud or low key, provided we have sincerity and faith. But, as it is written, "*According to your faith be it unto you,*" and faith may receive increase and strength, as the voice rises in strength and energy (which we know to be a fact), we entertain the stronger hope of *prevailing* thus with God. Observe, it was to the *blind* men, who followed him with a *cry*, that Jesus said, "*According to your faith be it unto you.*" They "*followed him crying.*" Think you that *cry* had no influence upon their faith? It was full of *hope*, and hope increased the louder they cried; but "*faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.*" We know also that penitents who cry to God the loudest, and with the deepest emotions, come out in religion

the clearest, and, indeed, are the most steadfast and useful afterward. This will hold good in nine cases out of every ten! (Matt. ix. 27-30.)

Faith may be stirred and strengthened greatly by the energy of the voice where there is grace, and a cry in the soul, "*I will not let thee go except thou bless me.*" Besides, it is written, "*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*" Prayer of this sort is apt to be somewhat loud. *Indifference* in prayer is usually still enough, but, for all that, we are sure it meets with but little favor with God. *Lukewarmness* in prayer is as offensive to God as in anything else. (Rev. iii. 16.)

I have little more to say. We consider nothing inconsistent in prayer that is countenanced or sustained by the word of God. If some of my helpers "pray as if they thought the arm of God, though mighty, is asleep, and needed an awakening," the prophet Isaiah expressed something akin when he cried out, "*Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in the ancient days, in the generation of old.*" (Isa. lv. 9.) These men of God are well acquainted with the Scriptures, and also with the history of the church, especially with *Methodism*. They know well what God wrought by their fathers in their days, and that by prayer which "*opened heaven*" over many a congregation. They have also facts in their own history and experience. What prayer can do—mighty prayer!—they know; and are no way backward in taking the kingdom of heaven by the *violence* of prayer! (Matt. xi. 12.)

CHAPTER XLIV.

TO ———: A TALK WITH A SKEPTIC.



WELL, if you were present at the time in question, it was well; better hear what you did hear than learn it "second hand." What think you of that line of a poet?—

"*Truth* is a staff rejected."

What you have been leaning upon is no *staff*, but a *reed*; and instead of supporting you, whether in actual sin, or *unbelief*, which has in it the seeds of all sin, it has bent, splintered, pierced your soul. For, has it not betrayed your trust, and failed you in the hour of need?

2. There is much less *neutrality* or *indifference* in the world, as to religion, than many good people suppose, or bad people pretend to. I am convinced of that; and the judgment day will prove it. Indeed, as Dr. Adam Clark remarks, the devil seldom inspires *indifference* to religion; the subjects in whom he works are either determinate opposers of true religion, or they are systematic and energetic transgressors of God's laws. And he quotes Ephes. ii. 2 as proof.

3. Your *judgment*, I fear, has had little to do in the matter, nor your *reason*, although *passion* may. In nineteen cases out of twenty, such opinions as yours have emanated from the tribunal of corrupt and misleading passions. Look within

and back upon the past, and assure me, if you can, that I am mistaken, so far as you are concerned! The remark of one some years ago occurs to me, that opinions are generally formed on *appearances*, but the true judgment of things on *investigation*; that opinions are often crude, irrevelant, and inconsistent; while the decisions of the judgment are systematic, regular, and consistent. He added, *opinions* are the fruit of passion or of feeling, while *judgment* reposes upon reason, and upon the word of God.

4. That man in Ireland, who asked a similar question to your own, had no such mental embarrassments, for he was most sincere. He stood up and inquired, "*What is truth?*" and continued, "Long have I searched for it, and I have found it at last. There it is," holding out a New Testament, but, instantly putting it into his pocket, said, "*It is prohibited*"—meaning, by the Roman Catholics. Ah! sir, you are no Romanist, and yet Satan and skepticism have succeeded in interdicting this book from being any test of your faith. In the reign of Henry V., a law was enacted in England, prohibiting the reading of the Scriptures in English, on pain of forfeiture of "*land, catel, lif, and godes*, from their heirs for ever; and be so condemned for heritics to God, enemies to the crown, and most arrant traitors to the land." There was a great "*famine in the land*," in those days, "*not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.*" (Amos viii. 2.) And as predicted by the same prophet, so it came to pass in England, "*And they shall wander about from sea to sea, and from the north even unto the east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.*" A knowledge of these

facts renders the word of God very sweet and dear to English Christians!

5. What a difference between *you*, and *those* who were so grievously afflicted by that prohibitory law! Instead of searching for the *word* from north to east, and from sea to sea, you would take similar pains to avoid it! In the one instance, we perceive the spirit and wickedness of the Romish Church; in your case, the nature and spirit of *skepticism* and Satan. Ignorance of the Scriptures prevailed greatly in those days. But the difference between the effects of *voluntary* and *involuntary* ignorance will be made apparent in the great day! This is all I have time to say at present.

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6. So you think "Bible Societies are in the other extreme of the English Roman Catholic prohibitory law, poking the Bible in every man's face." Perhaps, sir, to render some men's condemnation in the last day more convincingly and irresistibly just. A provoking thought it may be, but true, nevertheless! Your boast is nothing. All the infidels in Europe and America cannot stop the progress of the Bible Society in either hemisphere. Before a circular saw gets under way, the strength of your little finger would detain it; but once in motion, it would bid defiance to your whole body, ay, would cut its way through solid oak! When a ship lies in port, motionless, a slender cord is sufficient to detain her there; but once under way in full sail, before a prosperous gale, she would snap the strongest cable, or drag her anchor as your boy his plaything! I know not what they might have done in the earlier stages of the Bible cause; but now, sir, the saw is in motion, and it will surely cut its way through all error, superstition, and wick-

edness, over all the nations of the earth. The breath of praying millions fills the sails of this cause, as well as the divine breathings of the Holy Spirit; advance it must, in defiance of all opposition.

7. These remarks you may apply also at your leisure to certain *strictures* on this *revival* now in progress. But one thing at a time. With the eloquent Summerfield I would say, "They cannot stop the progress of Bible Societies. Sooner may they arrest the sun at the antipodes, and prevent his rising to illuminate our horizon; sooner may they confine the winds in the cave of Æolus, never again to cool and refresh our atmosphere; sooner may they stem the mighty stream that leaves the mountain's sides, and interdict its progress to the ocean!—for the word of God shall accomplish that which He *pleases*; *it shall prosper in the thing whereunto he has sent it; the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea: the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*"

The following sentiments, sir, of a great and good man now with God, are the sentiments of millions now upon earth, and were never more deeply felt than now; and while I echo them, though imperfectly, through this temple, they will thrill our hearts, and for aught we know, the hearts of hundreds of millions in glory!—that the cause of Jesus Christ is the only one which will live and prevail amid the wrecks of time: strong as the arm of Omnipotence, it will hold on its majestic course, bearing down and crushing everything that resists its progress; everything that is placed on this foundation is safe—but inevitable ruin awaits everything beside. Woe to the man whose doctrines are not united with the kingdom of Christ; woe to the man who sets himself to oppose this holy kingdom; Jesus Christ is

made head over all things to the church. He has marched down the track of ages, holding the north in his right hand, and the south in his left, with his eye continually fixed upon this single cause, and forcing all nations and events to pay tribute to it; and the providence of God, like a column of light, continually illustrates this fact; and so it will be down the descent of time to the end of the world, prostrating all opposition!

And, whether my skeptical antagonist has relished these sentiments or not, others have; and they will not be displeased if I draw upon the same source for more! The same eloquent preacher predicted a glorious spring for our world, after the passing away of a long succession of wintry years; when the beauties of holiness shall clothe every region, and songs of salvation shall float on every breeze; then shall it be seen that this world was not made in vain. We have only to look down the vale of time, said he, to see—how transporting! the miseries of six thousand years to come to an end, the convulsions of a disordered world composed, and the glory of Zion filling the whole earth. Lend me an angel's harp, he added, while I look forward to approaching scenes, which, distant as they then were, enraptured the souls of the holy PROPHETS, when from the mount of vision they beheld across the shade of many troublous years the church standing on the field she had won, triumphantly shouting, "*Lo this is our God; we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*" Sometimes in their sorrows, while nothing was escaping from them but the sounds of a breaking heart, a glimpse of this glory would break upon their view, and the tear which stood in their eye forgot to fall, their half-uttered sigh died upon their tongue, they awoke to rapture, and exclaimed, "*Thou*

shalt arise and have mercy on Zion, for the time to favor her is come, yea the set time is come." Hallelujah! How such sentiments do fire my heart for the work of soul-saving! And how they have fired other hearts in this audience, also!

The skeptic, perchance, who has called forth these sentiments just now, may have had a few sparks of Gospel fire flung in his cold heart; though not warmed to the same degree as that *infidel*, some weeks since, in this town,* who declared that it was as much as he could do to refrain from shouting "*glory*" aloud, when listening to the verses which I heard a poor pious woman sing outside the walls of a certain fortified city. Some present who remember the circumstance will not be displeased to hear them again, that he who says he has always to *look down* to see a Christian, may know something of the comfort he enjoys along the *valley road* to heaven, and how high he shall have to look by and by to get a glimpse of him!—if not from the icy peaks of infidelity, from a worse position—where Dives has yet to "lift up his eyes" to get a sight of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. That humble woman sang the verses as if she wanted heaven and earth to hear them, her face beaming the while with heavenly radiance; and more than she, felt in that hour, but in a higher sense than Burns contemplated in that one line found somewhere in his poetry:

"Over all the ills of life victorious!"

Who the author of the verses was I know not. At my request they were copied from her lips—they were new to me:

"My rest is in heaven, my rest is not here,
Then why should I murmur when trials are near?"

* Sheffield, England.

Be hush'd, my dark spirit; the worst that can come,
But shortens thy journey, and hastens thee home!

"It is not for me to be seeking my bliss,
Or building my hopes in a region like this;
I look for a city which hands have not piled,
I pant for a country by sin undefiled.

"The thorn and the thistle around me may grow,
I would not lie down upon roses below;
I ask not my portion, I seek not my rest,
Till I find them for ever in Jesus's breast.

"Afflictions may damp me, but cannot destroy;
One glimpse of *His* love turns all unto joy;
And the bitterest tears, if He shine but on them,
Like dew in the sunshine, turn diamond and gem.

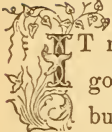
"Let doubt, then, and danger my progress oppose,
They only make heaven more sweet at the close:
Come joy, or come sorrow, whate'er may befall,
An hour with my God will make up for it all!

"A scrip on my back, and a staff in my hand,
I'll march on in haste through an enemy's land;
The road may be rough, but it cannot be long,
And I'll smooth it with hope, and I'll cheer it with song!"

And now my text, Rom. i. 16. And who would be ashamed of a system of *religion* which thus cheers the poor and the afflicted; and which gives us such constant assurances of final victory and triumph?

CHAPTER XLV.

TO THE SAME—BOLD IN THE PRESENCE OF FACTS.

T matters but little to me in what part of the service good is done, and souls are blest or saved, if they are but blest and saved—*before* the text or *after*. The great object of preaching is to accomplish this very thing, and not to build up or sustain a reputation for learning or eloquence or being a great preacher. At least, this is my sincere and conscientious principle; and I have to assure my *curious hearers* of this continually, at the risk of an appearance of *egotism*—they who happen to get disappointed, expecting some great things through vague reports about success and other things, or because they either suppose me capable or incapable of loftier pulpit exhibition and finer things; and, perhaps, as good Richard Baxter used to say to his hearers, were I a Christian no deeper than my throat, I would fish for myself, and study to *please* more than *save*. But, with that great and good man, I can sincerely say I do *believe* what I preach, and that the Judge is at the door—that we shall shortly see him in glory, and the host of heaven attending with acclamation; or, that death and hell—apprehension and eternal condemnation—must ere long bring these matters to the quick. We may *outface* truth now, but death and judgment and hell's convincing arguments we cannot outface.

2. The Gospel has had many *critics*, and revivals of religion as well. When men show disrespect to such *manifestations* as we witness here daily, it is only another way of showing their secret contempt for the Gospel. For, be it known unto you, all of you, that it is the Gospel, plain Gospel truth, backed up by the power of God, which produces the effects which you do hear and see. A flippant individual is of the opinion that *interest* and *passion* will long hold out against the closest siege of diagrams and syllogisms—that they are absolutely impregnable to *imagery* and *sentiment*—will bid defiance to the most powerful strains of Homer and Virgil; though he thinks they may give way in time to the batteries of Euclid and Archimedes!

3. The author from whom I quoted the other day was the late Rev. Dr. Griffin, of the American Presbyterian Church. I could only refresh my memory from a few notes taken some years ago, not having the discourse at hand to consult. A fragment or two more met my eye among my papers from the same source, and may be useful just here. His remarks upon the final triumph of the Gospel, and the eternal destiny of the human soul, are worthy of your serious reflection. I did intend to have quoted them then as they occurred to me, but, having lengthened out my remarks farther than I had intended, and the case of that infidel who was so electrified as to shout “Glory!” occasioning a digression, I found it inconvenient to return to my notes from Mr. Griffin, so had to let the matter drop.

4. However, they may have as salutary effect now as then. He went on to say, “Ten thousand times ten thousand *captives* shall drop their chains and come forth to light, with joys

too big for utterance in the final triumph of the Gospel over all the earth and over all flesh. This miserable world of ours, once the emblem of hell, after being so long shaken with tempests, shall, like the waters of a peaceful pool, reflect the image of heaven. Paradise shall be restored, and then shall appear, to the confusion of the enemies of Christ, the blessed efficacy of the Gospel to heal the wounds of a bleeding world. Oh! would not coldness," he added, "be rebellion in a Christian, when viewing such a scene from our Pisgah?" In developing the grandeur of the Gospel in its designs and revelations, he called upon his audience to follow only *one human soul into eternity*, and there trace its endless course through delights which flesh and blood could not sustain, or through fire sufficient to melt down all the planets—pursue it through the ascending degrees of its eternal progression, see it leaving behind the former dimensions of seraphim and cherubim, and still stretching toward God, or sinking for ever in the bottomless abyss! And closed by an aspiration, if I remember aright, that his subject might burst like ten thousand thunders over the heads of all who were still faltering as to which side they would cling to a little longer!

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How often I have to reply to that question, "What is truth?" Yet never once, in your sense, to a believer in *divine revelation*. Ponder that fact! "*Truth*." Would you acknowledge it if introduced to it, think you? *Truth*, in general, is anything which is in conformity with fact. It is precisely the opposite of falsehood and deception. Truth is that which Satan hates, and which every sinner hates, in proportion to the value of the game he is playing with the devil. Truth!

it is what an old writer calls a beam of God, his essence, so to speak; he is "*a God of truth,*" "*and keepeth truth forever,*" and "*his truth endureth through all generations,*" are Scripture phrases. The most orient pearl in His crown is truth. St. Paul speaks about "*the pillar and ground of the truth,*" and of some who are "*destitute of the truth,*" and of others, who "*turn away their ears from the truth, unto fables;*" and yet of others who "*resist the truth.*" Truth, like its divine Author, sir, finds not an easy passage through this world of ours!

5. Truth, as a pious man observed, is the *pillar* of our salvation—it is the *rule* of our faith, the *root* too out of which faith grows. It is that which prevents our faith from being *fancy*—faith without the support of truth, would be fiction. "*Thy word is truth,*" said Jesus Christ, who called himself, "*The way, and the truth, and the life.*" The Holy Spirit of God, who inspired and dictated the Scriptures, is called "*the Spirit of truth.*" Here is a foundation upon which we may build high as the heavens!

6. *Truth* is the whole doctrine which Jesus Christ and his apostles taught. It is that, in part, for which his *blood* was shed, and to which the blessed *martyrs* testified in their death, and for which they suffered their blood to redden the earth. It is that the clear knowledge of which turns every man's sins to *crimson* before God. To hate truth, besides, is *treason* against his throne, and he will certainly treat it as such. To persecute truth is rebellion against its Author, for he that strikes at truth, strikes at God; and he that hates truth, hates God. These are great truths, as sure as there is red blood in the arteries and veins of your body. To make out a proper estimate of a man's state and character before God, and of his

prospects for eternity, we have only to find out how he treats the *truth!*

7. Your next inquiry must receive a short reply: "How may I know the truth?" How may you know the sun, that it is the sun, and not some transient meteor, or *ignus fatuus*, the offspring of some great *quagmire* or other? How but because it creates day, and leaves "*no darkness at all,*" and is placed far above the reach and control and whims of men? How but from the fact that you need no substitutes for his light when in the sky? How but because you know that every thing that lives or grows or blooms, or is fruitful, lovely, or beautiful, is dependent upon his beams? How but because he cheers, warms, and delights you, unless, like some people who have *sore consciences*, and cannot bear the strong light of *truth*, you happen to have *sore eyes*, which are pained by his beams, and you are forced to exclude them, or to close your eyes against them? Do you understand me?

8. The Bible is our sun; and its doctrines and precepts and promises, its light and beams, its glory and its power. The Bible, like the sun, creates our day. It leaves no darkness within the range of its beams. It makes our day, and we need no infidel substitutes. It originates and nourishes whatsoever things are *true, honest, just, pure, lovely*, and of *good report* among men. (Phil. iv. 8.) Remove from the visible universe everything that owes its existence, beauty, usefulness to the sun, directly or indirectly, and what would we have left? And, to use the sentiment of Mr. Everett, addressed in a letter to a great meeting of the American Bible Society, to which he was invited, but was unable to attend—that, were we to strike from the political, moral, and intellectual condition of mod

ern society, all that has flowed directly or indirectly from the Bible, we would reduce European and American Christendom to the state of barbarous and semi-civilized countries, whose characters have been formed or powerfully influenced by the Koran, or other religious codes of the East. *Annihilate* the Bible, he added, and with it all its influences, and we should destroy with it the whole spiritual system of the modern world, all our great moral ideas, refinement of manners, constitutional government, equitable administration of law, and security of property, our schools and benevolent associations, the press, fine arts, the equality of the sexes, and the blessings of the fireside; in a word, all that distinguishes Europe and America from Turkey and Hindostan! Ponder these sentiments, and then hearken to what your heart says, when you inquire how you may know truth?

9. It is not without reason, then, that we sometimes call the Bible "*The sun of revelation.*" The Bible was made for man, and man for the Bible. Observe the motions of your conscience and judgment when you read it or hear it read, and you shall know that it is the truth, and the way of life. Let the voice of conscience and the wants of your soul drive you to secret prayer, and you shall find that there is scarcely a word or sentence on your lips, or upon your heart, that may not be traced to the Scriptures—showing, old as the Bible is, that it is entirely up to the wants, emotions, and conceptions of the soul in the nineteenth century as in bygone centuries. The Scriptures have to come to our aid in all our approaches to our Creator, else silence would sit upon our lips, and stillness and death within the soul. Oh! sir, seek peace to your mind, and healing to your wounded conscience, through the atoning blood of Christ,

and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free !

7. Nor is this peculiarity confined to the first stages of repentance and faith. The emotions of the newly converted soul and the higher experience and joys of the advanced Christian are all supplied with appropriate language from the Scriptures ! Thus it is that truth, Scripture truth, and its language, accompany us life's journey through, nor quit us when we die. The Bible waits on goodness, and attends the good man all the way, as light and glory attend the sun, till he sinks quietly down under the arches of the west. It is in the society of the Bible, and there alone, we realize the truth of that sentiment of Jamblichus, the ancient philosopher—"As light naturally and constantly accompanies the sun, so truth accompanies God and all that follow him !" Blessed be God !

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I have no wish now to go into other themes. He spoke truly who said, "Those who reject the truth are abandoned by the just judgment of God to credit the most degrading nonsense." The grossness and absurdity of most deistical creeds abundantly prove the truth of the assertion.

There is no such *cross-firing* in the Scriptures as you suppose—no *self-contradiction*. "*The Scriptures cannot be broken,*" says our Lord. That fact is an article in our creed, from which we cannot be shaken. God, to use some of the allusions of Scripture, breaks the teeth of the young lions, the ships of the mighty, and the teeth of the ungodly, but he will not, cannot break his own word. He breaks the high arm, and wickedness, as a tree ; the earth he makes to tremble, and it is broken by his will ; the staff of the wicked, the rod of the

smiter, the cords of wickedness are broken by him; the graven images and their altars, the yokes and bars of kings and their kingdoms and their hearts are broken, even as the vessels of a potter, and all the adversaries of the Lord are broken. Ay! but the word of the Lord—the declarations of our God in the Scriptures—he will never break, “*for the Scripture cannot be broken!*” He will not break his own word, upon which he causes the hearts of his people to trust. He has built much of his glory upon his truth and faithfulness to his word and promises. (2 Cor. i. 20.)

Jesus Christ, blessed for ever! while upon earth pointed to the heavens, and then to the earth, and then to the Scriptures, and then declared that sooner than one jot or tittle of the law or word of God should fail, or come to nothing, heaven above and earth beneath should disappear for ever! (Matt. v. 18.) Before the eyes of that startled multitude which surrounded him, many of whom “had set light by the word of God,” and questioned its *truth*, he pointed to these visible objects, and astounded them with the declaration that God would sooner let heaven and earth pass away and perish, rather than suffer that or any other portion of his word to fail of accomplishment! “*It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than one tittle of the law to fail.*” (Luke xvi. 17.) Need you marvel, then, at our trust in the Scriptures? Or that we all received that promise on last Friday night with such simple and implicit confidence? (Mark xi. 24.) Or that such evident replies from Heaven were received among the people, and with such astonishing effects?

“How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word!”

Be it known unto you, also, that it is by the same unwavering confidence in divine veracity that we predict the destiny of those who die believers or unbelievers. Instance that declaration in John iii. 36, which spreads itself as a canopy of mercy over the believer in health, death, and in heaven, "*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;*" and, at the same time, as a canopy of wrath over the unbeliever living, or dying, or in hell, "*And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him ;*"—backed up by the most awful decision of our Lord himself in his great commission to preach the Gospel to all nations, "*He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.*" From these Scriptures there is no getting away; you must either *believe* or *renounce* them, but the *risk* is undeniable.

In view of these solemn declarations, the inferences of a celebrated divine are sound and convincing, that the same passages of Scripture upon which God has embarked his declaration of mercy to the believer, he has also embarked his declaration of wrath against the unbeliever; and that there is a law in the Gospel as unfailing as any law in nature, which binds the present state of a faithful believer here with the transports of his glory hereafter; and there is a law and a series of consequences in the Gospel as unfailing as any series of processes in nature, which binds the present state of the obstinate sinner upon earth with all the horror of his future wretchedness in hell—that the faith in Christ to which we are invited in this world has its sure results in pardon, regeneration, and holiness, a happy dying hour, a bright ascent upward, and a welcome admission into heaven, and an eternal occupation in the empire of peace and joy; and the unbelief to which Satan and

a corrupt will invite the sinner has as sure a result in hardness of heart, a miserable dying hour, and its landing-place in hell. How fearful, then, the peril of a sinner! Could you blame him who declared that he would not live an *unbeliever* one hour for all the world? The reason he gave was that he might die and go down to hell in that hour. Need you wonder, then, at the exclamation of one, "All the words of men and angels cannot describe the awfulness of being Christless?" Or the sentiment of another, as well try to measure eternity as a sinner's danger out of Christ! Ponder these things, and may the spirit of God apply them to your heart and conscience. Amen!

* * * * *

Let "*a bemoaning Ephraim*" listen! *Truth?* To be sure it is! "*Truth* must be eternal in its nature, without the possibility of ever becoming falsehood." But why should you *moan* over that, if you are willing to allow truth to bring you a weeping penitent to the feet of Christ? Truth is designed for the eternal soul of man, and that soul for a God of truth, to enjoy his smiles for ever and ever; but, as St. John says, "*No lie is of the truth;*" nor did God ever design *falsehood* to be the element, or any part of the element, upon which the human soul should feed! That man is the only creature of all creatures in this visible world, who is capable of contemplating God in his works, and of offering him adoration, needs no particular argument or illustration from me. If you admit it, there we may leave it.

If, however, the human soul be so endowed and intended to love, serve, and obey God, he never designed it should believe a *lie*, and thereby become a *lying soul*. But, would it

not be the greatest wonder philosophy has ever yet discovered, were it proved beyond contradiction that this God has never revealed to such a soul some divine and infallible *standard of truth*? considering, too, its fallen state, its liability to err, and the prevalence of *temptation*, to which it is so constantly exposed? To suppose that God has peopled this world with souls, destined thus, and yet has left it *vacant* of some revealed standard of eternal *truth*, is an absurdity I, for my part, could never believe. It would be an *anomaly* in government exhibited by no civilized nation under heaven—subjects held accountable, yet without a code of laws having issued from the supreme authorities of the land. Believe it not; such a sentiment is a lie, and Satan, who desires this world as an appendage of hell, is the father of it. It is bad enough as it is; but deprive it of the Bible, and of all faith in the Bible, and hell itself would be its only equal! Hasten to the throne of grace, and lay your reasonings at the footstool of Christ. His blood was shed as an atonement for your sins. Believe that fact, and you shall realize its truth in a sense of conscious forgiveness. (Ephes. i. 7.)

Are you aware that your sentiment quoted in the outset of these remarks, did not altogether escape Epictetus, the old philosopher of Hieropolis? He observed, "*Truth* is a thing immortal, eternal, of all things most precious; better than friendship, as being less obnoxious to blind passions!" Were he now upon earth, and had he been by your side when you gave expression to your sentiment, you might have received this caution from his lips: never to consider that as divine truth which fans the corrupt passions, draws the soul away from God and purity, which degrades and injures both soul and body.

One in the Bible exclaims, "*There be many that say, who will show us any good?*" But he prays immediately, "*Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.*" Imitate his example, when they inquire, "Who will show us any truth?" They are afraid of losing you, that is all! Those who inquire thus, turning their backs upon the Bible, while viewing all its glorious effects in this land, might as well do the same to yonder sun as he is marching through cloudless and infinite blue, and then inquire for that which has enlightened our hemisphere, and filled sky and water, hills and dales, and meadows and mountain-sides with light and sunshine! all the while doubting whether the real cause or source of all this has yet been discovered by any one! The sun is encompassed by mysteries inaccessible to the human understanding, and thereby enhances the glory of his Creator. The Bible, in like manner, has its mysteries; and if it had not, I would doubt whether the same God is the Author of both! Pray, oh! pray that the Divine Being may lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and dissipate entirely that dark satanic shadow which yet lies across your understanding.

Satan has an "*outer darkness*" in this world, as well as in hell; nor need we travel far to find it. I marvel at his diligence in excluding from it the light of revelation. (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.) May this *revival*, which already spans the gulf of darkness in this town, like that rainbow among the mountains of Wicklow which flooded a dark ravine with its many-colored glories, be the forerunner of a flood of glory from "*the Sun of Righteousness*," now undoubtedly in our sky;—the revival, like the rainbow, announces the glorious fact. Hallelujah!


What a Golgotha is around us! The time to favor Zion has come, and that ravine of wickedness may not be forgotten. The purposes of God may be great and merciful. Let us have faith in Him that lives and reigns. Those that pray for a revival, and watch for divine manifestations among a people, enjoy them most when they come. I have known some devoted people on the look out for the commencement of a work of God among their neighbors with some such emotions as a writer supposes we should have were we to hear of a design contemplated by God to subdue the rebellion of hell and to rescue its victims. How we would admire the unresting benevolence of Heaven, and with what impatient longing should we desire to know the way in which the sun of the divine glory would arise on the blackness of darkness, and how it would paint its lustre on the clouds of perdition! Blessed be God! the glory of Jesus Christ is increasing both in intensity and saving power in this great work; and in a single hour the glory of the Lord may arise upon that region of the shadow of death! Amen!

It will be better for you to dissolve that connection. In cutting off your "sins at a stroke," let the next stroke sever the tie that binds you to that evil companionship. This is my advice. All your movements will be feeble and wavering until then. Some of those "caveats" of him who calls himself your friend, are forcibly put, and cleverly sustained; but what of them! "*Cui bono? cui mala?*" exclaimed the old Latinist; "what good? what evil?" Ay! what good can they accomplish? but what evil they may do! To what evil do they tend! Alas! a Sabbath-school boy could tell you! And what does it all amount to? The main question remains un-

touched. Those "notions," as he calls them, have not originated with us. They are found in the Bible; they flow from that book, as water from a fountain. The doctrines we teach are from heaven! "The world's deepest *well* owes its treasures to the skies," said a pious man in Scotland!

CHAPTER XLVI.

TO "ONE OF THE SAME CLUB"—A PHILOSOPHICAL DEIST.

ET one of a certain club hearken! I do not wonder that Jerome brings in Tully with his oratory, and Aristotle with his syllogisms, crying out in Hades, "They that leave the light of the *word*, following the light within them (as some on earth speak), prefer the shining of the *glowworm* before the *sun*." Burns was about as sound a theologian as yourself, when he held that the light which led astray was light from heaven! I would not like to assume, with Jerome, that either Tully or Aristotle are in a place of misery. If they had not the Scriptures, their accountability was less. There is a *light*, of which St. John speaks, "*which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*." And Paul instructs us to believe that "*a manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal*." If they walked according to the light they had, which, indeed, some think doubtful, it is now well with them. If among the lost, their condemnation is less severe than that of those who had the light of revelation, but renounced it for something which they called light, but which gave them little trouble in an evil way.

2. When we neglect the Bible—to use remarks I have read somewhere in Dr. Chalmers' works—when we neglect the Bible

we insult God, as we would insult an acquaintance in sending his letter back unopened, or letting it lie by us unread. When we place our hands upon the Bible, he added, we have come in contact with the very materials of a communication from the Deity. In the breast of God there was a motion and a desire toward our species, and here is the expression of it. To many this conveys nothing new. They are aware of it all; yet most woefully heedless are they of the obligations they are under to read and ponder the mind and will of God therein revealed. What are they doing who refuse its perusal, or who treat it as a thing of insipidity? Are they not trampling into insignificance a formal embassy from heaven? In this blessed word of God we find light and direction, and offers of mercy and eternal life, open to all, and at the taking of all; and in proportion to the frankness and freeness of its offers will be the severity of our condemnation for the neglect. Those lines of Lord Byron are in place here. Hearken:

“ Within this awful volume lies
 The mystery of mysteries.
 Oh! happiest they of human race,
 To whom our God has given grace
 To hear, to read, to fear, to pray,
 To lift the latch, and force the way;
 But better had they ne'er been born,
 Who read to doubt, or read to scorn.”

3. It is only ignorance of the Scriptures, or want of patient investigation, which has tempted you to complain of “the paucity of themes” introduced in the Scriptures. That a man may read that book over, and remain after all an infidel, I do not deny; but I doubt whether, after perusing the Bible with

any degree of attention, any one could honestly prefer that charge. However, until you are more explicit, it is not worth while to enlarge. Be so good as to give me a list of the *themes* in which it is deficient. But let me advise you, first consult a good Concordance—Cruden's—before you commit yourself too far! Not a few, sir, in trying to *catch* the Bible in error, have been caught by it themselves! Therefore be on your guard! It is a wonderful book, the Bible! A couple of infidels were standing together on the deck of a vessel, as she sailed past a desolate island of the sea. One said to the other, "Suppose you were condemned to live upon that island alone, and had the choice of but one book for your companion, what book of all books would you choose?" The other replied, "I would select Shakspeare, because of the variety of his themes." "Well," rejoined the other, "although I do not believe the Bible, yet I would choose it for my companion, *for the Bible is an endless book.*" Ponder this incident at your leisure.

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Hold! dear sir. Have you never read the reply of one of the ancient fathers to a clamorous disputant, who shouted, "*Hear me! hear me!*" "I will neither hear *thee*, nor do thou hear me; but let us both hear Christ!" Ay! would that all *controversialists* could be brought to abide by the decisions of such an *umpire!* If it put not an end to all controversy, it would greatly lessen them; certainly it would end one point of dispute between *thee* and *me*; that one declaration of his, for instance—"Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; they that have done evil, unto the resurrec-

tion of damnation." (John v. 28, 29.) *Marvellous* indeed is the announcement. Believe Jesus Christ, and the matter is settled beyond dispute. His words are *unmistakable*. I believe, and until death shall abide by his decision. Here I stand immovably, upon the veracity of the Son of God. If you refuse to believe my Lord and Master, his *servant* has no more to say upon the subject. To the honor and glory of Him I love, this determination I owe. One remark, however: a "*resurrection into damnation*" does not mean *annihilation*; such a construction is merely *gratuitous*.

Socrates and Plato spoke well of the Supreme God; and so did many other noble minds among the ancient philosophers, poets, and orators. But tell me whether you have ever met any sentiments in their writings equal to those four divine sentences in holy writ?—"God is a Spirit;" "God is one;" "God is light;" "God is love." Here, as one observes, we find *spirituality of essence*; *unity of substance*; *purity of nature*; and *benevolence of character*. In that one sentence of an inspired apostle, "*The world by wisdom knew not God*," he quite disposed of all the notions of your heathen classic *literati*!

As to "*the triumph of science*" affording a "triumph to deists"—in what, I pray?—leaving "*the testimony of the rocks*" out of the question—which are but cold and senseless things, and their *strata* and *material*, after all that has been spoken and written of them, are too uncertain for reliable data, especially with regard to such an old rent and torn and shaky planet as we occupy! Besides, sir, there is found in the Bible a record of a terrible event which occurred nearly two thousand years after the *creation* of the world, according to Mosaic

chronology, which greatly affects the testimony of the rocks, and of the whole *strata* of the earth, to a vast depth. It looks to me like a sort of intercepting provision of Providence, to defend the Holy Scriptures from the reckless deductions and conclusions of some geologists? I mean the *deluge*, sir!—of which God declared his determination beforehand, “*I will destroy them with the earth.*” By sound inference, the *strata*, if not the entire constitution of the earth, met with as thorough a breaking up and breaking down, as *society* did upon its surface, and as the respective body of every particular sinner who perished in that wide, universal grave of waters. (Gen. vi. 13.)

It is recorded of the same event also—“*On the same day the fountains of the great deep were broken up.*” Vast reservoirs of waters rushed to the earth’s surface. Now the consequent vacuum they left behind—the pressure from above, and terrible convulsions attending, and the sinking of “the circumambient *strata*” into the vacuum beneath—contributed largely, doubtless, to the fulfilment of the threatening already alluded to—“*I will destroy them with the earth*”—the people and creatures on its surface, equally with the earth itself. If you can imagine how complete their organic or physical destruction was, it may afford you some conception of that which befell the earth at the same time. The breaking down of the earth’s substance, and its consequent amalgamation once more with the all-pervading waters—the *strata*, various in materials and gravities, resettling into those beds where our curious and inquisitive geologists have found them—must ever render their deductions regarding the age of our globe exceedingly *unreliable*.

But what I desired to inquire of you, for I did not intend to linger so long "among the rocks," was this: in what departments of "moral science" have the deists won any triumph over revelation—in any one of these three extensive fields of investigation—the *attributes* of God, the *properties* of the soul, the *nature* of morals? Are you not aware that so late as the early part of the present century, one of the most learned men in England, one who perhaps had no superior in Europe or America, challenged, as it were, the whole civilized world to show whether any writer, after exerting his utmost ingenuity, has been able to add a single principle to the system of divine truth, not already laid down in the Bible—or to discover one attribute of God beyond those recognized in that book—or anything *new* relative to the human soul—or to add a single article to the system of morals taught in the Old and New Testaments. He admitted that much had been written upon all these subjects, without adding anything to what had already been recognized upon the pages of divine revelation. Deists were silent; the learned world was silent, and indeed have remained so ever since, upon the subject. No attempt was made to falsify the assertion. Accept the challenge yourself. It is not too late. Here is a fine opportunity to immortalize yourself; certainly one benefit is sure to accrue, as by this means you will become better acquainted with the Bible and the vastness of its resources.

A wonderful book is the Bible! If it was "written at an age comparatively barbarous, and before science had developed itself"—yet the discoveries of science have not in anywise proved its *incompleteness*. At the end of *eighteen hundred* years, after all that science has done for the world, the Bible

maintains its position and claims to originality, upon the greatest and most important themes that could occupy the human mind. To what else than divine inspiration are we to ascribe such facts as these? To me they are most convincing and comforting, and sufficient to induce me, without hesitancy or scruple, to venture my all for time and for eternity upon its decisions.

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The *trio*—those “three friends” of yours—had better correspond with themselves, in their own way, as they seem very well adapted to each other. They would be sure to get out of humor with me! Can you discern to *which* of the three the following remarks of an acute observer are applicable? He says there are certain minds of so inert and frigid a temperament, that any reference to things of a spiritual nature is lost upon them—being altogether too refined for their taste. Any object raised one inch above the level of this life, is too lofty for their conceptions. The molehills on the plains of this world are their only mountains! With regard to another of them, his “THOUGHTS” are well enough in their way, when allowed to keep on in a certain direction; that is, when, like Berengarius, he disputes about things investigable by the light of nature; pausing there he becomes something of a Solon. But when he projects his thoughts beyond, into subjects of a spiritual and eternal nature, he quite loses himself, and circles round and round like a bat—tempting one, if near him, to shout Tasso’s line into his ear—“reasonings”

“That circle round and round, nor reach the seat of sense!”

As to “the *third* of the three,” I deprecate his infirmity of

temper; so the less said the better! They tell a story in Germany of one Peter Schlemihl, who lost his shadow! When a man's method becomes so attenuated and unsubstantial as to be without a shadow of a truth, I think of Peter Schlemihl!

CHAPTER XLVII.

TO "ABATTIS"—ON STYLE.



HERE did you fall in with that French word! Poor defences for your ramparts, if these are all you can oppose! A Frenchman, from your manner of expressing yourself, would be apt to give it a different turn! Come, come! You must elevate your style, even though your theme be low and unworthy of anything better. But you should remember, when talking or writing upon the doctrines and morals of the Christian religion, they have had appropriated to them the finest style of our language, even by opponents. Elevate your language, then, away with slang phrases and mere play upon words, else you may force me to apply with more pungency than is consistent certain caustic definitions of a writer who wielded the quill last century!

"A juggler is a wit in *things*,
A *wit* is a juggler in *ideas*,
A *punster* is a juggler in *words*!"

It can do your cause no good, while it excites contempt in persons of understanding. You skeptics should respect your system, so far, at least, as to clothe it in decent language when advocating it. Rather difficult, I suppose; yet, it may be

worth an effort. A rogue succeeds better when well dressed! The higher classes of society are much taken with *style*. Voltaire, Rousseau, Hume, Bolingbroke, and others captivated with the brilliancy of their style.

The *abruptness* of my own style may be a fault, but my hearers perceive it is forced upon me by other and more pressing claims. Self-denial is required often in avoiding enlargement when a theme opens invitingly before me. A stern valuation of time and words may be a virtue, though at the expense of grace of style. This is an age of *verbosity* and *prolixity*, and it is well when circumstances sternly forbid both. But the faith of God's people, ay, and of sinners, is not to stand in "*the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*"

I like the sentiment of Addison, that if we must lash one another, we should do it *elegantly*, even though it be with the manly strokes of wit and satire! I am also of the old philosopher's opinion, that, if I must suffer equally from one or the other, I would rather it should be from the paw of a *lion* than from the hoof of an ass!

However, some allowance should be made for your system. I remember a remark of Boileau, the French critic, that it is impossible for any thought to be beautiful which is not *just*, and has not its foundation in the nature of things, and that no thought can be valuable of which *good sense* is not the groundwork—a sentiment quite sufficient to dry the ink on every skeptic's pen. There is a natural way of writing, of which Addison speaks, that always carries with it a beautiful simplicity—a style which he admired in the ancients, and which renders their composition so charming in the present day. He thought no one deviates from their style or from the natural

way of writing but those who want strength of genius to make a thought shine in its own natural beauties.

This is about all I have to say. Your heart is far from being happy. How can it be? The end is to be yet more bitter. But I know a tree, the tree of life in the Gospel, a branch from which would sweeten the fountain of that heart of yours and the stream of its words! Truly it would, as did that *branch* which Heaven directed Moses to cast into those wells of bitter water, recorded in Exodus x., by which they immediately became sweet. But this privilege cannot be allowed me so long as you relish the fruit of that forbidden tree—*skepticism*.

* * * * *

True, infidelity is the same now as in their day, but these were superior minds! You may play on their fiddle, but you cannot make their music! Do you understand me? Have you never read the story of Gainsborough, who became so enamored of the music made upon a fiddle by the great violinist Giardino, that he was frantic until he purchased the instrument—like the servant girl in the *Spectator*, he thought the music lay in the fiddle!—which he purchased at a high figure, but was surprised and shocked when he found that the music of the instrument remained behind with Giardino, and all the scraping and screwing he could apply he could not coax out the music that had given him so much pleasure! Can you make the application? Those talented writers made infidelity attractive to you; they played well upon the instrument; it was not their *theme*, but their talent, which made it so attractive—for what is there in their system to charm any man of sense and virtue? You have paid a high price already for

their instrument, and more is yet to be paid. Gainsborough did not mortgage his estate for the fiddle, but you have *pawned* your soul for this. Alas! after all your scraping and screwing, its music is not to be coaxed out!—it remains behind with the learning and talent of the Giardinos! Let me remind you, by the *spur* of a merry poet of the last century,

“ And reasons good,
By better only are understood;
Sharpen your wits, then, or you'll meet
Contempt as certain as defeat!”

CHAPTER XLVIII.

TO THE SAME—THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.



FEW remarks. The attention of "*A looker on!*" But, sir, Phocion, the Grecian, once wisely remarked that just *persuasion* proceeds not so much from the ability of the speaker as from the *disposition* of the hearer. A good hint, which you may profit by.

As to the predictions of your friend, there is "*a silver lining*" to those dark clouds hanging on the horizon of the political and religious world. But many such clouds have gathered and dispersed without injury to either. "*The Lord reigneth.*" The Bible and Christianity have encountered clouds and storms without number, but they exist and flourish still; and never more deeply rooted in human confidence than now. *Limited views* are the necessary result of a circumscribed position, like Ephemeron in the fable. That *insect* of a day, relating to its youthful kindred in its expiring voice how that it had seen the coeval sun arise in early youth climbing up the east, but, now that that sun was surely sinking in the western sky, an awful catastrophe or a final night might be safely predicted! The ephemeron expired; but the next day the sun arose in the east brilliantly as ever; before sundown,

however, there were other expiring ephemerons predicting, as before, his final extinction! How many ephemerons have appeared in our world and disappeared since the days of Voltaire, who, you are aware, predicted the annihilation of the Bible and the Gospel!

I am reminded of a sentiment uttered by a celebrated Protestant many yours ago. The King of Navarre, who was a Roman Catholic, and bitter in his opposition to the Protestant cause, had been speaking of its downfall, and how it would be brought about. The good man replied, "Sire, it assuredly behoves the Church of God, in whose name I speak, to endure blows, and not to strike them; but may it please you also to remember that it is an anvil that has worn out many hammers!" A German divine—the eloquent Krummacher—made a beautiful observation in one of his sermons some years ago. He said the Church of Christ overcomes by submission, and prepares a triumph for Christ by a triumph over herself; and either fights her battles like the sun, which dispels the mists, and causes them to descend in fructifying dewdrops, or like the anvil, which does not itself strike, but cannot prevent the hammers which fall upon it being split to pieces! How often do we see those striking similies illustrated during a revival of religion! For, what is true regarding the Church in general, is equally true of it in particular places. Though of not much account in the world, God's dear children are precious in his sight everywhere; and he will teach them how to overcome, or else fight their battles for them!

To some superficial persons, the history of the Bible and the Gospel is next to a blank. And, as to their future history, it is natural they should look upon it as likely to be *ephemeral*

as their *past*. To others, however, their *past* is familiar, and replete with the most stirring events that have ever occurred on the stage of our world; and their *future* they know, from yet unfulfilled *promises*, shall be rich and glorious—of the fulfilment of which they have the most undoubting faith. I must leave you to judge of these two classes of persons, which you consider the noblest and most reliable in matters of opinion.

That the Bible has been assailed by innumerable enemies in past ages we know very well; and that it still has enemies we are equally assured. But *why* it should be so, has perplexed wiser heads than ours. "One might have hoped," says one, "that by this time antagonism to such a book might have ended; a book that alights everywhere with healing in its wings, that has dissolved the worst fetters of humanity, marked the line for ages between liberty and despotism, as it seems almost about to do in our own between civilization and reviving barbarism, and has so gathered up in itself all the rudiments of the future, and the seeds of advancement, that its eclipse would be the return of chaos, and its extinction the epitaph of history. The resistance of ages to this book, however, is, after all, its crowning legitimation. The Bible is too good for the race it has come to bless. It blesses them like an angel whose mission is peremptory, and it troubles too many waters in its work of healing to be left in peace. It is felt and feared by all the rulers of the darkness of this world. It is the visible battle-field of invisible forces, showing in the radiant faces of the martyrs that have died for it, and the unearthly struggles of those who have hunted it from the earth, what mysterious interests are suspended on its safety or its destruction." Can

you avoid appreciating the truthfulness of these remarks—or detecting of what spirit your friend is of—or the character and origin of your own impressions and feelings?

That infidels of all grades are on the *alert* at the present time, and with a deeper intensity of opposition to revealed truth than ever before, can hardly be questioned. The streams of error in these United States never were more numerous, nor so deep, nor so widely extended and insinuating as now—never so decidedly determined toward undermining *religious truth*, nor their united currents more directly setting toward the gulf of infidelity. And, unless the friends of truth are on the alert also, and in right good earnest, the inundation of error, such as neither we nor our fathers have seen, may lay waste for a time the fairest provinces of the Church of God, to the *destruction of many*. I say for a time; for the gates of hell cannot prevail against the church. Jesus has declared it, and we believe it. No weapon that is formed against her shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against her in judgment will he condemn. This is her heritage from the Lord, and her righteousness of the Lord. Thus it is written, and so we believe. (Isaiah liv. 17.)

Before dismissing this subject, may I request you to direct your friend to the following remark, found in Whiston's Essay on the Revelation of St. John? It may furnish him with an additional material of thought. That fine writer tells us that Sir Isaac Newton on one occasion observed that infidelity will overrun Europe before the millennial reign of Christ commences; that the corruption of religion in all *Christian establishments* cannot easily be purged away in any other manner; that such establishments are likely to be subverted by violence

and blood; there being much reason to fear it will be impossible to remove them in any other way.

The signs of the times, now in the last half of the nineteenth century, are, I admit, fearfully confirmatory. Whether the waves of European infidelity shall so accumulate as to submerge this Western world, or those of American infidelity reach and overflow Europe, He who sitteth on high knoweth. That we live in an era the signs of which are ominous of future trouble and distress, those who walk closely with God do perceive. The Old World is in much perplexity, and men's hearts failing them for fear, in looking for those things which are coming to pass there. This New World is groaning and travailing in pain in all establishments, political and religious, while wickedness overfloweth like a flood. We have only to search the Scriptures, and take a catalogue of those sins which *marked* out nations of old for vengeance, to form an estimate of what lies before this nation, if it repent not. Compare the marks upon the present generation, with those of bygone generations which received such bloody baptisms and other afflictions for their wickedness, and we may well tremble before a holy, just, and sin-avenging God. May the Lord have mercy upon us! Symptoms are not wanting of divine displeasure. Clouds black and stormy appear and disappear. A *crisis* looms up; the pulse of the nation quickens into feverish expectancy. It quickly passes away. It was only a warning that the elements are accumulating. The time has not come. Sin has not reached its height; therefore the elements of national disorder are yet under restraint. The crisis has not terminated entirely; it has only removed its boundaries farther into the future. But blessed be our God! he has reserved unto himself a remnant,

whose peace is bound up with that of the nation, and they will not cease to pray that wrath may be averted. May they prevail! The wants, necessities, and sins of the country call loudly for their prayers and earnest supplications.

Is this a time, then, to level contempt against the Bible, that great palladium of the nation's safety? I have not time to enlarge; nor to say much upon your concluding question. I know not for a certainty, how many languages and dialects there are in the world; not less, I believe, than between *three and four thousand*. This we do know, that the Bible has been translated already into the languages spoken by about *six hundred millions* of the human race; and *hundreds of thousands* copies of the word of God are now passing from hand to hand among them! There is hope for the world! Blessed be God! Glory to the Lamb! Amen!

CHAPTER XLIX.

TURNING THE BATTLE TO THE GATE.



ET those whom it may concern hearken; for the thoughts of your hearts are about to be revealed. “*Impatience!*” I have had nothing, comparatively, to try my patience—nothing that I had not previously reckoned upon. “*The carnal mind is enmity against God;*” and therefore some *saucy* things may be expected to emanate from it, where divine things are concerned. He who “enters the lists” against mind thus constituted and armed, without taking such results into the account, has not properly studied the nature of mind in arms against God. Besides, *impatient* folks are those who are unwilling that others should think for themselves. Now I allow poor infidelity its right, so far as I am concerned, to speak out all that is in it! If it claim to be, “a science,” let it bring its proofs, and allow itself to be tested by those rules to which other experimental sciences are forced to submit. If, however, that which claims to be a science, turns out to be merely the science of *unbelief*, its votaries must not expect to be treated with much consideration. Christianity, even as a science, challenges the world to investigate its claim.

The simplicity of Bible *terms* is no argument against them,

unless they are proved to be false. If they convey a true meaning, or a right impression, they must be admitted. Their simplicity is their honor. If science confirm and illustrate them, they must pass at full value, in the minds of all right-minded men. They are *simply right*. Science, by her technicalities in explaining the laws of nature, renders them complex. The terms used in the Bible are as *expressive* as they are simple—designed for all capacities, in all ages of the past; yet may stand side by side with the more *scientific terms* of a higher state of civilization; which, to have reached forward to when the Scriptures were written, would have rendered the Bible unintelligible for ages, to millions. Thus, as one observes, “When God said, ‘Behold, I set my bow in the clouds,’ had he said, ‘Behold, I will give water the property of refracting different colors at different angles,’ how unintelligible would it have been until a later period of our world’s history.” Providence rather designed, to use an idea of Dr. Chalmers, that every new triumph achieved by the mind of man in the broad field of discovery, should only serve to bind him more closely to the Bible; and that by the very proportion in which philosophy multiplies the wonders of our God, we should prize that book. And so it comes to pass; deny it who can!

Read over that challenge which the Lord God gave to Job out of “*the whirlwind*,” contained in the 38th, 39th, 40th, and 41st chapters of the Book of Job. Let the collected learning and science of the nineteenth century be brought into comparison with the philosophical hints therein contained. Sir, those chapters will strike you with amazement—at the height and depth, at the correctness, beauty, grandeur, sublimity, of the philosophy therein exhibited. A great critic considered the

Book of Job *the Idumean Encyclopædia*, but these chapters, if not altogether that of themselves, contain a sublime system of philosophical inquiry unequalled in the literature of ages. Indeed, as one remarked, the Book of Job is accounted on all hands a work that contains the purest morality, the sublimest philosophy, the simplest ritual, and the most majestic creed! And yet, sir, this is but *one* book of the Bible, and that the oldest portion of it, perhaps. Had I time at command, and you were so disposed, a review of the different books in that Book of books might change your opinion vastly upon the subject in question.

Engagements prevent me from entering into discussions with Mr. — upon certain topics; but the *pebbles* in the streets might as well aspire to hold competition with diamonds as his notions with the sublime truths of Christianity! If he were the only *skeptic* in the world, and the world itself what God would have it, he would be the wonder of the world! Wander where he would, all eyes would be turned upon him with pity and astonishment. People would call upon each other to look upon a man who preferred fancies to fact; one so near eternity, yet doubting whether he has an immortal part to enjoy it—so near to hell, yet questioning whether he has a soul capable of enduring its flames; one who knows not the day nor the hour he may be sent there, yet *careless* as if he had a lease of life for fifty years to come—turned away from the sublime truths of revelation unto fables.

There is much apparent *assurance* in his sophistry; yet his own judgment cannot but assure him how poor an exchange it would be to part with a sweet and comfortable hope of a life to come, for anything he has yet offered; and the

sweet thought that angels are the sharers of our joys—that they are ready to congratulate us as we enter eternity, standing ready to take us by the hand when the body sinks in death, “not leaving the soul,” as an excellent departed one observed, “like a shipwrecked mariner on a desolate and unknown coast, uncertain in what direction to travel, but to be at once under the convoy of sister spirits!” Ay! under the conduct of angels who hail the soul the moment it steps upon those immortal shores, bearing it away into the presence of the general assembly and church of the first-born. That angelic convoy with the soul of an ascending Lazarus on their wings affords us a glimpse of the economy and usages of the spirit world, and very assuring and cheering to our faith it is! Comfortable thoughts, sir! Comfortable thoughts! And he must excuse us if we hold fast to them, until he is able to offer us something better!

An honest peasant surprised an infidel, the other day, who was jeering him for believing the Bible, by the reply, “We country-people like to have two strings to our bow.” “What do you mean?” inquired the infidel. “Only this,” rejoined the poor man, “that believing the Bible and acting up to it, is like having two strings to one’s bow; for, if it is *not* true, I shall be a better man for living according to it, and so it will be for my good in this life—that is one string to my bow; and, if it should be true, it will be better for me in the next life—that is another string, and a pretty strong one it is. But, sir, if you do not believe the Bible, and, on that account, do not live as it requires, you have not one string to your bow. And oh! sir, if its tremendous threatenings prove true, oh! think what then will become of you?” The infidel walked on.

Consider what I am going to say: If the supreme God acknowledge the Bible in eternity as his word, it will ruin you both. All the arguments you have ever mustered against it here, shall go for nothing there; nay, but will recoil upon your trembling spirits, and with a force you little contemplate.

* * * * *

Yes, some read the Bible to "*catch it*" in some contradiction or other, and are themselves *caught* by it; of which fact your neighbor has become a witness lately. Nor is there anything very surprising in this, on the principle that it has come from God. Although his feelings are somewhat "disagreeable" at present, a happier state of mind is in reserve for him. The *bitter* first, and then the *sweet*; *death* first, and then *life*, seems to be God's order with sinners. "*I kill, and I make alive: I wound, and I heal,*" is the voice of God in Deut. xxxii. 39. Not, "I make alive, and kill; I heal, and I wound." The worst comes first. Satanic policy is different.

It may stand to the credit of no mean scholar, that he despised not the hint of a humble person that there was something in the Bible that would repay him, if he laid aside his poetry for its perusal. He did so, probably to "hunt after poetry;" but *truth* hunted him, and ran his conscience down at length, and caught the man! He had not finished the Book of Genesis, it seems, until doubt and unbelief were finished in him, terminating with an earnest cry for peace with Jacob's God, and he found it too! And found, besides, that "that which is highest, purest, liveliest, and most excellent to the mind, in reference to any object, is poetical;" all of which, to his surprise, he discovered in the Bible, and in the highest perfection;

even as Cowley freely acknowledged, that all the books in the Bible are either the most exalted pieces of poetry, or the best materials in the world for it!

It is a wonderful book, the Bible! That necromancer who prided himself in eluding the keenest eye in the multitude to "catch him in the mysteries of his art," was vain enough to suppose he could "catch the Bible in some palpable mystification—listening with a keen ear to the reading of the book of Jonah, little suspecting that "the keen eye of Heaven" was upon himself. Well, the prophecy of Nineveh's overthrow somehow overthrew him; the sentence of death against them strangely resulted in life to him; the prediction of their destruction caused his salvation. True, there were some remarks by way of exposition; but life and salvation flowed through the word! Another great sinner was cut to the heart when reading Rom. ii. 21, 22.

I have never been altogether assured that Luther himself, when he first made the acquaintance of the Bible at Erfurth, did not at first suspect it of *heresy*; nor that he did not read it to "catch" it in that; but it *caught him*, ay, and proved him and all his teachers *heretics*; it cast him into convictions, and into the dungeon of despair; and, after he suffered awhile, unfettered his soul and introduced him to Gospel day, in possession of a heart made orthodox as itself; it opened before him the brazen doors of superstition and unbelief, set the prisoner free, and sent him through Germany as *a pillar of fire!*

It is a matter of the deepest surprise to some, and of amusement to others hereabouts, to behold how suddenly *skeptics* are arrested by the truth, from week to week! To-day chuckling their "wise hits" against the Bible, and proclaiming

victory over all its authority and predicted ills. A day or two more, and they are hit so hard by its tremendous truth, that they sob or roar aloud for mercy. Instance Mr. —, whom a shrewd man compared to the *cock* in the Arabian fable, who “fell a clapping his wings,” as if he had obtained a conquest worth crowing over; presently down pounced a *vulture* (his idea of truth!) and snatched the great conqueror away! If desperately astray in past life, and his appetite for error and death voracious, his awakenings to a new life were desperate also! And now what an appetite he has for things spiritual and divine! The Gospel is a great power, sir! But had *death* pounced upon that man, instead of truth, how terrible would have been his experiences! unless “God had suffered him to drop into the fiery lake with a senseless heart and a seared conscience.” A grapple with “*the king of terrors*,” and the apprehension of an immediate appearance before the dread tribunal of the living God, create very different emotions to those excited by a grapple with the living truth of the Gospel. *Hope* of salvation mingles with the bitterest sorrows of evangelical repentance. “Jesus Christ hath loved me, and gave himself for me, and I believe it!” like words set to music, sounding through a thunderstorm, are heard amidst the loudest outcries of these distressed sinners! “*Christ is the end of the law*,” says Paul. “In these words lie the spring of my peace, as well as the dying song, with which I hope, at length, gently and blissfully to fall asleep,” said a German Christian!

O ye astounded sinners! ye old companions in sin of him who has forsaken your ranks, “*flee from the wrath to come!*” For there is wrath to come—always to come, through all the future of a wretched eternity—*always to come!* You

may harden your hearts now, and set like flints your faces against God and his truth and righteous claims. “*Who hath an ear to hear, let him hear!*” An *irresistible power*, unlike that which assails you in the Gospel, will presently lay hold upon you, and you shall not be able to elude or flee from it. That *power* from heaven that opens the gates of eternity before the dying sinner, and lays open at the same time his sins, and presses them, like thorns, against his quivering and bleeding conscience, is on the full march to meet you. As it has befallen several trifling sinners since these meetings began, so it is likely to befall you. Why linger? Why procrastinate? Why suppress your emotions? Why stifle convictions? Why stir to leave this house of God? Why will you fly from the terms of offered mercy? Why hurry thyself away, poor sinner!—as if you could hurry away your mind from a thought that pursues it, an evil *prediction* which your own conscience admits there is too much ground for! Weep now, for you ought to weep! Sob now, for you ought to sob—but thank God, it is in mercy’s sight. Pray now, for you ought to pray; believe now, for you may believe, be saved, and live forever, through Him who died and rose again.

To you who remain in your hardness, and firm in your determination to outbrave truth, oh! I would say, with a faithful minister now with God, “The witness we are forced to bear is sad; it is sad to us; but it will be sadder to you, on the day when you shall know God will not be *outfaced*, when you might sooner shake the stable earth, and darken the sun by your reproaches, than outbrave the Judge of the world, or by your cavils, wranglings, or scorns, escape the hands of his avenging justice; when you would give ten thousand worlds

were they all turned into gold, pleasures and imperial crowns," that you had been on the Lord's side in time;—or that you never had lived a year in time, or that you had had a heart to have employed it in other purposes than those which characterized your earthly career.

O ye sinful men! lacking words of my own, the words of good old Robert Bolton rush forth into my utterances, like coals of fire;—as he cried, I cry. And oh! when the heavens shall shrivel together like a scroll, and when the whole frame of nature shall flame about your ears—when the great and mighty hills shall start out of their places like frightened men—when the wicked shall call upon this mountain or that rock to fall upon them—then shall ye know and acknowledge how truly right and blessed were they who in good season chose "*the Lord's side!*" Ay! on that day of wrath, when "no dromedary of Egypt nor wings of the morning shall be able to carry you out of the reach of God's avenging hand; when no top of Carmel, no depth of the sea, or bottom of hell, can hide you from Him that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; when no rock, nor mountain, nor the great body of the earth shall be able to cover you from that irresistible power that laid the foundation of them; when no *arm of flesh* or armies of angels can protect you from those infinite rivers of brimstone which shall be kept in everlasting flames by the anger of God;" when annihilation, that last hope of the worn-out veterans in iniquity, would be a boon, lies beyond all possibility of accomplishment; "when you are chained up by the omnipotent hand of God among spirits damned, and in a place of flames and everlasting darkness, where there is torment without end and

past imagination!" *there*, O ye sinful and unbelieving men! there, with all the arguments of perdition around you, ringing in your ears, and burning into your souls, you shall be forced to acknowledge how safe and right and wise it was to be on the side of the Lord and of his people among the inhabitants of time!

Think not, I beseech you, think not harshly of the *stranger* who thus addresses you; nor think for a moment that he has never exposed himself to a similar perdition; or that he has not in past life been made to taste the bitterness of sin. But you may look upon him as a sinner pardoned, saved by grace, and yearning for your salvation. Had my motives been different to what they are, the last half-hour might have been differently employed—in what one a long time ago called flashy oratory, neat expressions, and ornaments of reading, and other things, which he said were common matters of ostentation in his day, and, alas! too common in ours, by men who preach for their own glory, and not for the glory of Christ, nor the salvation of sinners—who have little sincere and hearty belief themselves, consequently little energy in trying to persuade others to believe. He spoke plainly who, two hundred years ago, called *flattery* in soul matters a species of *selfish villany*, that has but a short reward; and that those who are pleased with the exhibition of it in the pulpit to-day, may curse the flatterer forever. I would be faithful, O my hearers, as one who knows he must give an account!

Time is on the wing. Death is nigh at hand, and Hell hard by. The Lord our God is present. The space for preparation is short; it is all that is allowed. Time knows nothing of sleep or weariness; trifle not with it, for it never

returns; your loudest cries could not call back one of its fled moments; crowns and kingdoms and wealth of nations could not bribe or purchase back one hour nor one minute of by-gone time. Opportunities for salvation are indeed headlong; and as one justly remarked, some of you present have not the least assurance of being out of hell an hour! Oh! fly to Christ. Cry for mercy. Believe, and be saved. Repent, and believe the Gospel. Why not now? Oh! may those words which pierced a sinner to the heart pierce more to-night: "A man that may be damned before morning should seek religion to-night!" Ay! my friends, how many have departed from my humble ministrations to return no more—there was but a step between them and death! Time with you and me will soon be over. Look around! Look up! See—

"Remorseless Time!

Fierce spirit of the glass and scythe—what power
Can stay him in his silent course, or melt
His iron heart to pity!
On, still on he presses, and for ever.

"The proud bird,

The condor of the Andes, that can soar
Through heaven's unfathomable depths, or brave
The fury of the northern hurricane,
And brave his plumage in the thunder's home,
Furls his broad wing at night fall, and sinks down
To rest upon his mountain crag.

"But Time

Knows not the weight of sleep or weariness,
And night's deep darkness has no charms to bind
His rushing pinion.
On, still on he presses, and for ever!"

CHAPTER L.

TO ANOTHER—THE BIBLE ON THE ASCENDANT.



ET "one who begins to respect the Bible" hearken. While you *respect* it, others *love* it, and delight not only to *believe* its testimony, but to obey its requirements. "Let him now come down from the cross and we will believe him," said the men who surrounded a dying Saviour: not a word about obedience, only that they would *respect* his veracity, and not turn it into ridicule.

The remark was a just one—that the Bible is deep enough for the tallest *reason*, and fordable by the shortest; that here the lamb may *wade*, and here the elephant may swim! Ay, my friend, and here the tiniest hand may enrich itself with grains of *purest gold*, while the profoundest thinkers may find diving-places for *pearls* of great price, such as can be found nowhere else, such as angels might covet, and which, indeed, they "*desire to look into*." And there are mines along those streams of inspiration rich in ore more valuable than *the gold of Ophir*, and exhaustless. "My master's treasury differs from yours," said an ambassador of a certain prince to a great king who showed him his treasures. "Ah! how is that?" inquired the vain-glorious monarch. "In this: my master's treasury has no bottom, as I see yours have," alluding to the exhaustless Indian gold mines possessed by the prince his master,

But the same may said of him whose *treasury* of truth and promise is in the Bible, and who knows how to *work* those mines; without bottom or limit they are, for the veins thereof run parallel with eternity. Whereas all other sources, books, sciences, and what not, have their limits, and fail in the end, leaving us to depart into eternity alone, as Orpah did Naomi on her desolate return to Bethlehem, the city of her fathers. But the truths of the Bible cleave to the departing soul of the Christian as Ruth to Naomi, saying, "*Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.*" The truths of the Bible say the same, indeed, to the departing soul of the sinner, but with a very different meaning. You understand me, I suppose. Permit me then to congratulate you for your "discoveries," for, if they immortalize not your name among men, they may secure you what is better, a happy immortality in heaven.

That most infidels are deplorably ignorant of the Scriptures, I have had frequent occasion to remark. How unphilosophical, then, is it for them, with all their boasts about philosophy, to suppose they can reason correctly about a system which they have not properly studied! Your *scholarship* deserves credit, but (and you will agree with me) the manner in which you have studied the *Bible* in past years deserves *no credit*. There is not one science you have mastered that you did not thoroughly investigate the book or books which treated upon it, as acknowledged authorities. But the Bible, alas! "condemned at sight," while evidence against it was culled from "second-rate" authorities, and from the pages of its opponents. "Hear both sides, and then judge," was a maxim in Roman jurisprudence. The Bible has nothing to fear from

the closest scrutiny. Now that you have entered upon it in good earnest, the results need not be guessed at. The more you read and understand, the more you will be convinced of the truth of the religion of the Bible.

Content not yourself with what one calls "the mere surface truths of revelation, which may be had for the picking up," but dig deep—the deeper you go the richer the veins of divine truth. Beware of discouragement. It is in the things of God as in those of nature: common things are acquired with little labor, but uncommon with extraordinary effort. Dust and common earth are obtained easy enough; but men have to work hard and dig deep to reach the gold and silver veins. *Pebbles* in great abundance may be found along the highway or on the shores of the ocean, but *diamonds* and *pearls* are a rarity. They are only reached by skilful and determined divers, who, at the hazard of their lives, struggle to the bottom of the deep sea, and grasp for the shells in which the beautiful gems are deposited.

Beware, I repeat it, of that plague of most *miners*—distrust, unbelief, and discouragement—as in the case of him in a neighboring county in search of *lead*, who, after long and laborious effort, gave it up; but others began where he left off, and, after digging a few yards, reached the lead. They made their fortunes, but he, poor man, was *beggared!* Alas! what illustrations of this in soul affairs have we seen during the last few years? The grave-yards are full of such; and many who are yet astir in the thronging population around us, who set out to obtain religion, sought it earnestly, got discouraged, gave it up. But others sought "the pearl of great price," and found. They are happy now, and rich in faith and good

works ; while the others are in a state of *spiritual pauperism*. These are facts, sir ; therefore proceed, nor leave off until you possess in your own heart the *salvation* of the Gospel.

Some I have known to be “drowned out,” to use a miner’s phrase hereabouts, the sorrows of repentance overflowing them, like treacherous water in a new mine, they abandoning the enterprise, and returning to their old sinful companions and habits. Noble exceptions to these I have found, however, who resolved to “try again,” and find salvation or perish—that is, they preferred to die seeking mercy, if God so pleased, rather than give over the pursuit of it. Such never fail. The Spirit of God always shows himself mighty in the behalf of all such—“*mighty to save.*” Walking over the hills, the other afternoon, I noticed a company of miners standing together at the mouth of a pit. It was “a new shaft,” as they called it, which they had been sinking in hope of reaching coal. All appeared to be at a stand-still. “What !” I said, “have you given up the search for coal ?” “No, sir,” replied one of them, “but the water has drowned us out—driven us out, sir !” “But, do you think there is coal down there ?” “Sure of it, sir ! If we keep on digging we are sure to reach the coal, which we shall, when we get our steam-pump going to rid us of the water.” A few days more and they conquered the water, and, in a surprisingly short time they reached the coal, and were sending to the surface that which was of a fine quality, I believe. You perceive my meaning, my serious hearer ! Keep on searching the Scriptures, and praying for the manifestations of the Spirit to your soul, and you shall not search nor pray in vain.

Avoid mere theorizing. Treat Christianity as you once did

every science you studied. Test its doctrines, demonstrate them by experience, repentance, faith in Christ, pardon, and regeneration, and the witness of the Spirit, and that sweet promise, "*Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" "*And him that cometh unto me,*" says Jesus, "*I will in no wise cast out.*" On no consideration whatsoever. One of the ancients, you may remember, said, "After all, *experience* is the great mistress that ruleth all things." *Speculation* is not equal to *experiment*.

Set your opinions firmly by the word of God. In order to this, ponder that command in Deut. xxxii. 46, "*Set your HEARTS unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.*" Ay! my friend, set your *heart* unto all the words of God! There is just so much *worth* in what we do as there is *heart* in it! A friend of mine, some years ago, exclaimed in great simplicity, after reading a certain text, "O Lord, what a pity it is that thou shouldest see my thoughts so different from thine! O my Lord, as one man sets his watch by the time-piece of another, or by the sun thou hast placed in the firmament of heaven, so, just so, do thou be pleased to set my thoughts by thine, through Jesus Christ. Amen!" (1 Sam. viii. 21.) The God to whom he prayed answered effectually the prayer, and none more happy now than he!

Allow me to commend to your notice Psalm cxix. 105 and Prov. vi. 23; all your *opinions*, *works*, and *ways* are to be illumined, corrected, and guided by *the light of the word*. Perhaps you may call to mind Cicero's advice to his son: "It will be of more or less service to you as you make it truly practi-

cable in the sequel of your life." The same may be said of the Bible.

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I rejoice that "the Bible is on the ascendant" in your understanding and conscience. Read on, reverently, prayerfully, and sincerely, and you shall find it more and more so. "It is only in nature that we meet with God under a veil, while, in the connection of revelation, all veils and coverings are removed," said an excellent divine in Germany. He made the remark chiefly with regard to the person and work of Christ. To study the Bible he advised seclusion, and heartfelt and repeated aspirations to God for increasing light; that the more we do so, the clearer we shall find the infallible traces of Jehovah, and other wonderful and glorious discoveries. Remember, as you proceed, that it is no part of the intention of God in the Bible to foster or encourage intellectual pride. If you find things there "*hard to be understood*," you may strengthen yourself by the thought that there is a *divine design* throughout the entire volume, to humble proud human *reason*, and to exalt and encourage *faith*. I believe, with Mr. Melvill, that "a Bible without difficulties would be a censer full of incense to man's *reason*;"—that it would then be "the greatest flatterer of reason, passing on it a compliment and eulogy which would infinitely outdo the most far-fetched of human panegyrics." I recall another remark of his, that "Scriptural difficulties destroy none who would not have been destroyed had no difficulties existed!" If inclined to falter in the pursuit, shame yourself out of it by the recollection of the manner in which you set yourself about the study of certain abstruse sciences which you nobly mastered! Pray for the forgiveness of your

sins. Let your repentance be true and thorough. If properly broken down by penitential grief, you will find it no difficult thing to break with all your sins. When such a grief has opened your heart, it is only to make way for that living faith in the vicarious sufferings of Jesus Christ for *you*, by which you receive into that open heart of yours a feeling of pardon and adoption, and peace and love and divine joy. Then, and not till then, shall you realize with the Psalmist that the word of God is sweeter than *honey*, even the *honey of the honey-comb*! and the truth also of what Jesus said, "*The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.*" (John vi. 63.) The sentiments of a young Christian lady, the daughter of a titled nobleman, resident in one of the most brilliant cities of Europe, occur to me, which may be of some use to you in the present juncture. Speaking of the Bible, she remarked, "I experience a pleasure in reading that book which I never felt before: it attracts and fixes me to an inconceivable degree; and I speak sincerely, there, and only there, is the *truth*. When I compare the *calm* and the *peace* which the smallest and most imperceptible grain of *faith* can give the soul—when I compare this with all that the world alone can give of joy and happiness, I feel that the least in the kingdom of heaven is a hundred times more blessed than the greatest and most elevated men of the world." One shortly after exclaimed, "There! what a testimony for the Bible was that! Not a voice from a convent, nor from an almshouse; nor was it the language of one disappointed or disgusted, and who in a spirit of misanthropy turned to religion as a substitute for its former pleasures; nor was it the experience of a bed-ridden cripple, making a virtue of necessity, and seeking consolation from religion because

every other source of happiness was cut off. No! but the experience of a young lady, in the very centre of all that could dazzle the mind or fascinate the imagination; and in one of the gayest and most brilliant cities of Europe—one whom the *world* in all its most alluring forms is perpetually assailing, and seeking to captivate!" That you have experienced something of this is a matter for congratulation!

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The subject is not "disagreeable." Far from it. The Holy Spirit illuminated the mind of the *prophet*, or *apostle*, and excited his will to proclaim or write what he dictated, whether from within or without, by inward impressions or by angels or emblematic appearances, or *face to face*, as it were, and with *audible voice*, as to Moses. This is what we understand by the *inspiration* of the Scriptures. As to the *manner* of it, it came in such a way as not to leave room for a doubt in the person so-inspired. But as others were to be convinced, *proof* was necessary; and by the most convincing proofs, which required the mighty arm of God to exhibit, the truth of the *revelation* was established; "*God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his will.*" (Heb. ii. 4.) By such means God made way for each separate portion of his word, and gave it an enduring place in human belief.

Admitting the existence of an omnipresent as well as an omniscient God, there seems no great difficulty in the way of admitting the other fact also, that he could as easily converse with the *inward ear* of his servants the prophets, as men can talk to the outward ear of persons in their employ; and that the motion, or impression upon the brain, may have been as

intelligible in one case as the other. It only remains to be conceded that the person so spoken to had an undoubted evidence of the fact; nor is it reasonable to suppose that God would withhold such an evidence from the person so favored.

If *we* are capable of distinguishing the voice of a *friend* from other voices, is it unreasonable to suppose that the *prophets* of God had a similar faculty for distinguishing his voice? or, if necessary, that he could create such a faculty for that very purpose?

Despise not a good *commentary* on the Scriptures. Men who have given a lifetime to the study of God's word, know more than one who has but lately begun to study it. If a man resolve to *read* nothing but the Bible, to be consistent he should hear nothing else; then what becomes of the *preached* Gospel? As you are seeking advice, permit a hint: be not too much of a *recluse*. It is profitable to exchange thoughts with Christians—real Christians—such as are deeply experienced in the things of God, if you can find them. It sometimes requires a search; and they are found often where least expected—in the humble walks of life especially. I remember, when much younger in religion than I am now, meeting with the following in the diary of the devoted Brainard: "There are many with whom I can talk *about* religion; but, alas! I find few with whom I can *talk religion itself*. But, blessed be the Lord! there are some that love to feed upon the *kernel* rather than the shell!" A Christian friend had called upon him in his house in the wilderness, with whom he enjoyed a sweet season of conversation about the deep things of God. It was this that occasioned the remark just quoted. Oh! sir, seek the company of such!

All is not right with the person of whom you speak. I have known some intellectual eyes affected by what one called "a spiritual *cataract*." Then, sir, there are *natural spectacles*, and *satanic spectacles*, some of which caricature religion and deceive the unwary. You will be better able to detect these by and by. They have "Bank Detectors," you are aware, in most counting-rooms; very useful things they are. Such is the Bible in matters of religion and experience. Many are suffering in hell for the *same opinions*, and for cultivating the *same senselessness of heart*. They pressed on quite as defiantly and assuredly as he, till the flames of perdition effected what *truth* failed to accomplish—brought them to their *senses*. It is a sad thought, sir, but true nevertheless.

Divine patience waits, and waits long in this world; for God has time enough in reserve to *reckon* with sinful men. But, as it is written, "*There is an appointed time for man on the earth*," so *patience* has an appointed time. *Divine justice* lingers not when that time expires. St. Peter speaks of some who "*bring upon themselves swift destruction*," by "*damnable heresies*," and "*denying the Lord that bought them*;" and of some who in his day were exposed to an *unlingering judgment*, and an *unslumbering damnation*. (2 Peter ii. 1-3). While *divine patience* waits, and *mercy* pleads, *justice* stands back; but when these, weary with *entreating*, "retire behind the sword of justice red with ultimate and unrepenting wrath," then judgment lingers not, nor does damnation slumber. The Lord, this day, have mercy upon him, and upon all my impenitent hearers! Satan takes *heart* when men with heart resist truth and weary the patience of God.

But enough of this; a more cheering theme is in reserve

for this audience. *Eternity* will surely bring some *insensible ones* to their senses. They may live insensible, and die insensible, perhaps, but they cannot awake in eternity insensible. An irresistible hand will yet lay open all unpardoned sin before men. To be insensible with such a load of sin upon the soul, and with the *threatenings* of God volleying with such fearful significance as of late, and with such ulcerated consciences as some of you have, argues a fearful state of soul. The Lord have mercy upon us all! Once, in my travels, I saw a whole river disappear under ground, and, miles below, it reappeared. The surface of the country, however, gave no evidence that a river was rolling beneath, no more than the faces of some present, while *conviction for sin*, like that subterranean river, is rolling through their heart. I have known enough of people during and after a revival, and sufficiently of some present, to warrant me in making a very pointed application of the same. Hearken to the text: Heb. vii. 25.

CHAPTER LI.

“LET US ALONE.”



ET *us alone.*” Let one hearken who would be known by this *nomenclature*. But are you not aware this was the request of a devil, an “unclean spirit” which had possession of a man? (Mark i. 23-26.) And does it convey no idea, think you, of what spirit you are of, and to what you are tending? “*Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil,*” said Jesus. Well, if worst comes to worst, if you will have it so, and it must be so, let it be so; only let me drop this word in your ear: though you do not choose to embrace the religion of the New Testament, and wish to be entirely *let alone* upon that subject, yet, be it known unto you, the designs of *Immanuel* shall not miscarry, nor shall he want believers, nor his heaven inhabitants. *Multitudes* which no man can number, so numerous are they, are this moment filling the immensity of Heaven with their descriptions of praise “*Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*” (Rev. i. 5, 6.) Your *request* may be granted; “to all intents and purposes” you may be *let alone* by the *Spirit of God*. But that *death, devils, and the flames of perdition* will let you alone, I shall not assure you!

2. There are, indeed, “changes” to be effected in the *great future*; but widely different in various persons. Carnal insensibility will meet with an amazing change—I will not say for the *better*; not such as the *idiot* experiences the moment he enters eternity, when the mind, which was before lost and bewildered, entangled in the mazes of a deranged brain, obtains the use of its reason and entire capabilities, and saved there, we hope, as children are saved, through the merits of Christ. I believe, with one, that the *perversion* of the faculties is at all times more shocking and disgraceful than the *absence* of them by nature. And you may remember that the old Grecian philosopher Antisthenes declared that he would rather be punished with *madness* than abandoned to *vicious* courses. An old Christian struck the same note when he remarked, better be a fool void of *reason* than a fool void of *grace*. And if the sentiment uttered by another, centuries ago, be true, that God will surely call us to a strict account both for the *principal* and *interest* of the talents he has intrusted to us—and who can doubt it after reading our Lord’s parable of the *talents*? (Matt. xxv. 14–30)—then may such sentiments be accented with fearful force upon our consciences. Better, sir, lose the last gleam of intellect, and move among men a melancholy instance of the wreck and ruin of mental power, than live to be “*let alone*” in the abuse of God’s mercies and the noble faculties with which he has intrusted you.

3. This does not look like letting you *alone*! But you will permit, I hope, a few parting words. *Thorns* are “*insensible*” things in themselves, yet they are capable of giving much pain to others. Some insensible sinners are much like *thorns* and *briars* in this respect. Nevertheless, when fire envelops these

disorderlies in nature, they show considerable sensibility, and make a great crackling in the flames—like the *thorns* under a pot, of which Solomon speaks. God and such sinners must one day meet. The remark was “severe,” I admit: “The *stubble* is more able to resist the flames, or a *fly* to conquer the world, than a daring, walking lump of clay to conquer God, or escape his vengeance.” Was it more severe than those figures which God himself employs in Isaiah? “*Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Woe unto him that striveth with his Master! Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth.*” “*Who has hardened himself against him and prospered?*” saith Job.

4. If you are so *profoundly asleep* to spiritual things as you would have us believe—though it seems something like a contradiction, seeing you are so fidgety under truth as to exclaim, “*Let us alone*”—it might, perhaps, disturb your slumbers a little more if I whisper in your ear the observation of a shrewd divine, “If you are asleep, the devil is awake, and *rocking your cradle*; and busy, too, keeping off ministers, conscience, anything that would awake you. None of your enemies are asleep. Asleep! and in the midst of your foes! Is the *battle* a sleeping time? Is the *race* a sleeping time?” Be assured of this, there is a terrible awakening before you! “*The Philistines be upon thee, Samson.*” As the Philistines rushed on Samson, shorn of his strength, so shall your old convictions, by and by, and in tremendous force!—convictions which you shall be as unable to *conceal* as to suppress—like the river Tigris, and other rivers, of which Sir Matthew Hale speaks, which sink into the ground, and keep a subterranean

course more miles than you number years, and breaking out again above-ground, a new river to some observers, but to others a continuation of the old. Well would it be for you, and some others among my hearers, if such might be the case in regard to old convictions of sin and danger, even before you leave this house of God, rather than on the death-bed, or in eternity. For then, alas! they will, most likely, run on for ever and ever, parallel with your being and eternity. Should such be the case with any of you, you may remember *where* and *when* and *by whom* you were *foretold* of it. Precious sinner! think, oh! think, ere it is eternally too late! My soul would wail over you in the language of a German hymn:

“Sinner, oh! why so thoughtless grown—
 Why in such dreadful haste to die?
 Daring to leap to worlds unknown,
 Heedless against thy God to fly.

“Wilt thou despise eternal fate,
 Urged on by sin’s fantastic dreams,
 Madly attempt th’ infernal gate,
 And force thy passage to the flames?”

“Stay, sinner, on the Gospel plains!
 Behold the God of love unfold
 The wonders of his dying pains,
 Forever telling, yet untold!”

* * * * *

As you value your eternal interests then, ponder what I am going to say; but allow me the use of an illustration. Yonder is a rapid river, and within the bosom of that immense volume of waters is a *large fish*; and it is floating or swimming (as you

please) down with that powerful current. How little is that silly fish aware, surrounded as it is by the easy pressure of the softly gliding waters, with what a tremendous element it is encompassed! How unconsciously it moves along with scarcely any perceptible effort; till, lo! it comes for a moment above a terrific cataract; over it goes, and the river comes down upon it in "thundering tons." To apply this: Sin is the sinner's element; and hell is the centre of his gravity. It is in this deceptive and perilous element he is swimming; nay, he need make no effort as to the active work of *swimming*; even a dead fish may move with the stream. Let him set himself against the deep current of his corruptions, and endeavor to oppose the swift stream of infernal influence down which he is gliding; then shall he know to his sorrow the force of those "fearful elements" which are bearing him downward to the gulf of eternal destruction. But, ah! when he shall approach the falls of death, he will then feel, to his sorrow, the oppressive tribulation of that dangerous mass. And when he shall have been carried over the cataract, into the whirlpool of hell, and his past sins—the current in which he has been gliding so quietly for many years, and which has been as essential to his enjoyment as water to a fish—shall follow his terrified soul in thundering masses into the bottomless pit; then, and not till then, shall he know how tremendous was that element, the power of which he never knew, because he never opposed any effectual resistance to its fatal tendencies, on his passage to eternity.

You would do well to reconsider that notion regarding "small sins." Query: Is it possible that any sin can be small? If you can prove you have a small soul to lose, and a small

- God to sin against, and that there is any such thing as a small damnation, or a small hell; the other may be proved easy enough. There are degrees of sin, we allow; but if hell be the drift or tendency of every sin, alas! there can be really no such thing in the universe as a small sin. *Drops* of rain are small things, but then the river is made up of drops, and rain-drops supply the river. A single sin appears small, but that, and others joining it, may swell into a torrent that will drown the soul in destruction and perdition.

CHAPTER LII.

SEEING THINGS IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT.



FEW more hints for "*Let us alone.*" So! so! You are not, after all, so *insensible* as you fancied yourself! —not so fast asleep as you imagined? How could it be, seeing that both God and Satan have work for you? He that is not doing somewhat for God, must be for Satan. Not to work out one's *salvation*, is to work out one's *perdition*. Pythagoras spoke well when he insisted that "*ability and necessity lie near each other.*" And so did the German, when he exclaimed, "*our wants develop our faculties.*" The one originates or necessitates the other. Samuel Drew, the celebrated *mathematician*, and author of a fine work on the immortality of the *soul*, in giving account of his sinful life when a youth, in connection with his *shoemaking life*, observes, "When I was a young man, I was expert at *follies*, acute in *trifles*, and ingenious about *nonsense.*" That was the use Satan found for his great talents!

2. In the eyes of the world, this waste of time and talent may seem but of little account, except so far as it may prevent the attainment of worldly advancement. But when we look into the Scriptures we find it a serious matter—that parable of the talents, for instance, to which we referred last night. (Matt. xxv. 14–30.) *Principal* and *interest* will be required, remem-

ber! Centuries ago, one exclaimed, in view of this and other passages of God's word, "Better be a fool, void of reason, than be the devil's fool, void of grace." (Prov. xiv. 9.) Consult that! Solomon there declares it is only a *fool* that makes a mock at sin! A *natural fool* is not so sad a sight as that of one who has lost his reason—the melancholy spectacle of the wreck and ruin of high mental power, from which the last gleam of intellect has departed—like him of whom it was said :

"His darkness came down with no soft'ning gradation,
On the noon of his life it was instantly night;
'Twas the thunderbolt killing in swift desolation,
In its greenness and glory, the pine of the height."

Does the flight of time present a sadder scene than that? Yes, sadder by far it is to behold a noble intellect *perverted*; and, though capable of doing much good in the world, that capability only manifests itself in using the most effectual means of serving the devil, and ruining itself and others. It is some comfort we can pity and pray for such, if we can do no more.

3. "*A hearer*," who begins to see things in "a different light," and who, "by a close application to the study of the Bible," hopes to prevail against *unbelief*, would do well to ponder that sentiment of the poet, Cowper :

"But *oars* alone can ne'er prevail
To reach the distant coast;
The breath of heaven must swell the sail,
Or all the toil is lost."

Pray while you read; pray for the help of the *Spirit*. He must be to you what Philip the evangelist was to the man of Ethiopia: "*Understandest thou what thou readest?*" "*How can*

I, except some man should guide me?" (Acts viii. 26-40.) The guidance of the Spirit is what you need. The rays of the sun are the best paraphrases upon the natural scenery around us; and it is by the light of the Holy Spirit that we best understand the Scriptures. Conversing once with a good man in Switzerland, upon the necessity of the constant presence of God, he quoted that promise which God gave to Moses in the wilderness: "*My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest;*" and added, "With greater probability might a traveller make his way through an unknown and trackless wilderness without a guide, or a *mariner* steer his course safely through the rocks and shoals of a tempestuous sea without star or compass, than any soul of man find his way through this world to heaven without the guiding hand of Jehovah." A while after this he himself entered into eternal rest, saying:

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in thee I find."

But his remark is as applicable to him who would attempt to steer his way safely out from among the rocks and shoals of skepticism, tossed as he is upon a tempestuous sea of temptation, without the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

4. Perhaps you may be aware that a queen of England, Elizabeth, of famous memory, expressed a somewhat similar determination to your own, when her admiring subjects presented her with a Bible as she was riding in state through Cheapside, just after her coronation. She received it, kissed it, laid it to her heart, and said that the sacred volume had ever been her chief delight, and that she had determined it should be the rule whereby she meant to frame her government! Make it, my dear friend, you *rule of self-government*, and all

shall be well with thee and thine! That the queen *profited* by her attachment to the Bible, and that her delight in it did not decline, is evident from her remarks several years after: "I walk many times in the pleasant fields of the Holy Scriptures, where I pluck the goodlisome herbs of sentences by pruning, eat them by reading, digest them by musing, and lay them up at length in the high seat of memory by gathering them together, so that, having tasted their sweetness, I may less perceive the bitterness of life." The Bible, sir, is the church's *garden*, and every Christian has a perfect inalienable *right* to regale himself therein—be he prince or peasant. It is filled with all manner of pleasant plants and healing herbs and fragrant flowers, evergreens, and trees whose fruits never fail, and whose leaves never wither. The tree of knowledge is there, and also the tree of life, with no flaming sword to repel you from approaching it:

"Here the fair tree of knowledge grows,
And yields a free repast;
Sublimier sweets than nature knows
Invite the longing taste.

"Here the Redeemer's welcome voice
Spreads heavenly peace around;
And life, and everlasting joys,
Attend the blissful sound.

"Here may the wretched sons of want
Exhaustless riches find;
Riches above what earth can grant,
And lasting as the mind."

5. The famous philosopher Boyle used to say he preferred a *sprig* of the tree of life in the Bible to a whole wood of *bay*. Locke commended the Bible, because it has God for its author,

salvation for its end, and *truth* without any mixture of error for its matter; and because it contains more sublimity and beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence than any other book in any language under heaven. Judge Hale, that ornament to his country, confessed that he had often observed if he neglected to honor God's word by reading a portion of it every morning, things went not well with him that day. Robert, king of Sicily said, "The *holy books* are dearer to me than my kingdom, and were I under any necessity of quitting one, it should be my *diadem*." Oh! then, my dear sir! *read on*, and while you admire the beauties, neglect not to practise the precepts of that sacred volume.

"Read and revere the sacred page; a page
Which not the whole creation could produce,
Which not the conflagration shall destroy,
In nature's ruins not one letter lost."

6. It gives me pleasure, sir, to quote those eloquent sentiments by a member of the Irish Bar, at a meeting of the Bible Society. He arose, and, after some preliminary remarks, went on to say that, for his part, he would abide by the precepts, admire the beauties, revere the mysteries, and, as far as in him lay, would practise the mandates of that sacred volume! And should the ridicule of earth and the blasphemies of hell assail him, he would console himself in the contemplation of those blessed worthies who in the same holy cause had shone, had toiled, and had suffered; that in the goodly fellowship of the *saints*, in the noble company of the *martyrs*, in the society of the *great* and the *good* of every nation, he was contented to remain in error; and if his sinfulness was not cleansed and his

darkness illumined, at least his pretensionless submission might be excused ; that if he erred with the *luminaries* he had chosen for his guides, he confessed himself captivated by the loveliness of their aberrations, for if they err, it is in a heavenly region ; if they wander, it is in fields of light ; if they aspire, it is at all events a *glorious daring* ; and rather than sink with *infidelity* into the dust, he was contented to cheat himself with the Christian's visions of eternity ! If nothing but a delusion, it cheered him to think he was erring with the disciples of philosophy and virtue—with men who have drunk deep of the fountain of human knowledge, but who dissolved not the pearl of their salvation in the *draught* ; that he *erred* with Bacon—the great Bacon—the great confidant of nature, fraught with all the learning of the past, and almost prescient of the future, yet too wise not to know his weakness, and too philosophic not to feel his ignorance ; that he erred with Milton, rising as on angel's wing, and like the bird of morning soaring out of sight amid the music of his grateful piety ; he erred with Locke, whose pure philosophy taught him to adore its SOURCE, and whose warm love of genuine liberty was never chilled into rebellion against its author ; he erred with Newton, whose star-like spirit shot athwart the darkness of the sphere, too soon to ascend to the home of his nativity ; if he erred, it was with Franklin, the patriot of the world, the playmate of the lightning, the philosopher of liberty, whose electric touch thrilled the hemisphere ; that with such men as these he was contented to remain in error, nor would he desert these errors for the drunken death-bed of Tom Paine, or the delirious war-whoop of his surviving friends, who would erect his altars on the ruins of society.

7. But, enough for the present. Let my hearers hearken to my text: "*How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.*" (1 Kings xviii. 21.) Having stated the historical connection of the text in previous discourses, I hasten to lay down the following *proposition*: THAT IT IS UNREASONABLE, UNCOMFORTABLE, AND DANGEROUS TO HALT BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS IN MATTERS OF RELIGION—IN THE CONCERNS OF THE SOUL AND ETERNITY."

It is so especially, 1st. *To a backslider.* 2d. *To an unconverted church-member*, who has been *halting, limping* so long between the church and the world, that the disorder has become chronic, and who, to the present day, has no cure for his *wavering inconstancy*—this *spiritual palsy*! 3d. *To the skeptic*, who has long been wavering between Christianity and blank infidelity. 4th. *To the deceptive sinner*, who is not what he appears to be, indifferent to the whole matter; awakened he is, though he tries to conceal it, and, by his high head in prayer time and careless air, would make believe he has no concern about the matter. Were he to *sicken* unto death in our midst, or meet with an accident going home, it would be otherwise with him; or, were he honestly now to express the feelings of his heart, his bearing would, perhaps, be of a different character! 5th. *To the penitent sinner.* To each one of these I proceed to say, and to prove, that to *halt* thus *between two opinions* is *unreasonable* and *uncomfortable* and *exceedingly dangerous*.*

* Mr. Caughey has not furnished us with more than this outline of his sermon. The reader must accept it as a fragment.—ED.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE IMPRECATION.

“Led by the magnet o'er the tides,
That bark her path explores,
Sure as unerring instinct guides
The bird to unseen shores :
With wings that o'er the waves expand,
She journeys to a viewless land.”



OFTEN have I repeated these lines, and kindred ones in the same piece, when walking the ship's deck by night and by day, far out at sea, watching the magnet the while, and the ship's course, and the liberality of the breeze. Knowing our point of compass toward our port of destination, the fact of the vessel so steering, wind and steam, sails and machinery all working together harmoniously to further the object, was charming. To captain, mates, sailors, steersman, and passengers, that point of compass to which it was desired the vessel should sail was the prevailing idea : blow high or low the winds, whether steering through light or through darkness, or whether through stress of weather keeping her away a point or two, the *true point* was always the one object of interest—to return to which, with a favoring breeze, all sail set, the delight of all on board !

Well, what the *magnet* is to the *helmsman*, a text of Scrip-

ture is to me, frequently, when delivering an exhortation or preaching a sermon. Fixing upon a *point* of destination, my text, like the compass, indicates it; by that I steer, though, through stress of weather, I may have to bear away a point or two, or sometimes change course entirely, for the purpose of picking up a poor sinner floating upon some raft of skepticism, or hope, or despair, or one like to perish in some *foundering bark* that had never been built of Gospel timber; or to deliver a *broadside* against the squadron under satanic command—bringing them to—board them, man them, and dispatch the *prizes*, under the banner of Immanuel, for the port of glory!—or bear away on another point, signaling one bearing our own flag, and yet another showing different, but true Christian colors!—oh! fine employment this!—and on another tack, intercept a backslider who has lowered Christ's flag to Satan—assist him to hoist and unfurl his colors again!—and soon after, speak a poor fellow who has lost his spiritual reckoning, and, after putting him in possession of his true latitude and longitude, we bear away again upon the point indicated in our magnet—glowing, may be, with those sentiments we have often hummed on deck, accompanied by the solemn *bass* of the rolling sea:

“ Yet not alone, for day and night
 Escort us o'er the deep;
 And round our solitary flight
 The stars their vigils keep;
 Above, beneath, are circling skies,
 And heaven around our pathway lies!

“ Yet not alone, for round us glow
 The vital light and air;

And something that in whispers low
Tells to man's spirit there—
Along our waste and dreary road,
A present, all-pervading God ! ”

Oh ! but in many such deviations from my *main point* and wanderings away from my text, many a poor sinner has been rescued from something infinitely worse than a watery grave ! And sorely have I been criticised for such “*eccentricities*,” as they are called. But all that sort of thing is of little consequence, if souls are saved. A ship's movements at sea may appear very eccentric, when viewed from the deck of a distant vessel, if her commander's motives are not understood, and the telescope is good for nothing, or the *focal* arrangement is mismanaged ! The captain, more intent upon saving life in jeopardy, than gaining credit for good seamanship, or making a quick voyage, cares but little for such criticisms ; neither do I, with all due respect.

The truth is, brethren—and I need hardly tell you what I am persuaded you already know and believe—that my great object is to do good—immediate good, without any ambition to shine as an *acute sermonizer*. I never have had much reputation for that, and so have been happily relieved from anxiety to sustain pulpit character in that regard, such as is often displayed in an ingenious method of elucidating some *proposition* or other, or more commonly in the *firstly, secondly, and thirdly* order. Not that I always discard these ; but dearer to my heart it is to see a *first*, a *second*, the *third*, or the *thirtieth* sinner converted during a service, than to know some credit has been won by a strict adherence to system. If in straying somewhat *out of the way*, some poor sinner is arrested and

brought into the way, it concerns me little that "good judges of preaching" have been disappointed, if the expectations of Christ and his *angels* are realized. I can bear to know that certain persons here below are displeased, if fully persuaded there has been joy in heaven over one repentant sinner. (Luke xv. 7.)

Hearken! Gal. vi. 14: "*But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" And this is my *magnet*. Not in a material *cross* of gold, or silver, or brass, or iron, or wood, or paper, such as the Roman Catholic glories in, did Paul glory, but in the *doctrines* of the cross! Paul had much in which he might have gloried; in his origin, "*a Hebrew of the Hebrews,*" and "*of the tribe of Benjamin,*" the most beloved son of the patriarch Jacob; in moral character, "*as touching the law blameless;*" in his learning also, and zeal, and sufferings for the cause of Christ. But in none of these would he glory. In the *cross of Christ* he did glory, that is, in the grand doctrine of Christ crucified for the sins of the whole world, and the great salvation flowing therefrom—justification by faith, holiness, and eternal life!

Let "*A sincere inquirer after truth*" hearken. If my silence has given boldness to one of your old friends, he quite mistakes the cause. Had there been anything worth replying to, he might have heard from me. This may shock his vanity; but if he reserved a copy, he might, by reading it over, be of my opinion:

"Huge reams of folly—shreds of wit
Compose the mingled mass of it!"

His opposition, and that of others, do not surprise me. Long before any of us were born, one truly said, "The *laws* of

Christ give no quarter to *vice*, so vicious men will give no quarter to *religion*." It is with human nature now as then. And were Horace, the old Latin poet, upon earth, he would not have cause to alter his opinion much :

"Lawless and unrestrain'd, the human race
Rushes through all the paths of daring wickedness."

And what, after all, do their mighty lucubrations amount to? unless to illustrate an old Latin motto I have met with, the English of which is, "Out of breath to no purpose, and very busy about *nothing*!" Truly so, when they arrive at the conclusion, that the end of man is—*nothing*. It is a poor *triumph*, if they have succeeded in drawing some back to their old way of thinking, of whom the Church, and even the world, hoped better things. What one remarked a long while ago is fearfully applicable to some "*professed converts*" in our times; that some entertain Christ out of compliment, thinking that he would *please them*, or *not much contradict them*; but when they find that they have received a *guest* that will rule them, and not be ruled by them, then he is no longer their guest; but as we did not glory in any of these, nor in those who yet walk in wisdom's ways, but "*in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*," we have nothing to be ashamed of. They were better persons than they were before, while they remained with us, outwardly at least, and, we strongly believe, inwardly also. "*The day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*" If they were only but as *wood, hay, stubble*, when compared with the *gold, silver, precious stones*, the real children of Jesus Christ, the genuine *seals* to our ministry, why, then, the world

has got its own back again. It is welcome to the *hay, wood, stubble*, for the Church of God is better without them. If otherwise, we can only weep, and pray that our all-conquering Jesus may yet take the prey out of the hand of the mighty. (1 Cor. iii. 10-15.)

And now a few words to those of you *new converts* who yet hold fast your confidence in Christ—to you especially who once belonged to certain “clubs,” and others of you to “debating societies.” Oh! beware. Satan may have an advantage over you there you little imagine. Return there, and the old spirit may reënter your soul again—the spirit of debate, ambition, pride, vanity, and evil tempers; and, before you are aware, you are shorn of your strength, and once more weak and sinful as others. Once more I cry, *beware!* You are yet too young to discuss questions which have perplexed wiser heads than yours! Live, my young friends, upon that the nature of which you understand, that which will nourish and strengthen you. Nor will you, I hope, take it amiss, if I quote a strong reproof administered by a devoted minister to certain young professors: “If you will be *gnawing bones* when you should be *sucking milk*, and have not patience to stay till you are past *childhood*, no marvel if you find them hard, or if they stick in your throat, or break your teeth!” Rather, as babes in Christ, “*desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby*” (1 Peter ii. 2); which I know you will, if you believe that the Lord is gracious.

And now we proceed to the main question—and let the “inquirer after truth” weigh and compare a few observations with his own previous impressions and conclusions—regarding “the Jewish people and their isolated position.” The fact

contains a powerful argument, not only for the truth of the Scriptures, but for the character of Christ. While we glory only in the cross of Christ, we cannot but be grateful to Divine Providence for the conservative nature of the fact. Examine the particulars connected with our Lord's crucifixion, and you will find that *every utterance* of the representatives of that people which procured sentence of condemnation against the *Just One*, recoiled upon themselves in fearful retributions, and in a coincidence of circumstances truly startling. "*If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend.*" How soon after this did they lose the friendship of Cæsar forever, and that very thing came upon themselves by which they sought to terrify the Roman judge and extort from him an unjust sentence?

Pilate said unto them, in *irony*, doubtless, "*Behold your King!*" But they cried out, "*Away with him, crucify him.*" But that generation passed not away until Jerusalem rang with the cry of the Romans: "Away with them! away with them out of their country—away with their country, away with their sacrifices, away with their laws, away with their temple, away with their capital, away with the nation!" And away they were driven—"driven," as one observed, "driven out, like useless chaff, to the four winds of heaven, and condemned thenceforward to roam about in inhospitable regions, without a home, the scorn of all the world!" Driven forth from nation to nation, century after century, even as predicted by one of their own prophets (Hosea iii. 4): "*Without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, without an Ephod, and without Teraphim;*" as if unworthy to breathe the air, or of the ground upon which they tread; as if God would have all nations read on their foreheads the cause of their

grievous banishment in the words, "*His blood be on us, and on our children.*" More upon this in a few moments.

Pilate, seeking to release Jesus, said to the Jews, "*Shall I crucify your King?*" And what was their reply. "*We have no king but Cæsar!*" How soon this was verified to the letter—when they had neither king, nor home, nor country!

Pilate, washing his hands before the multitude, saying, "*I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it;*" brought forth that horrible reply, "*His blood be on us, and on our children!*" Since the world began had never been uttered so dreadful an *imprecation* as this, nor while the world stands can its equal ever have an expression! It was horrible! Had this self-anathematizing speech been confined in its effects to those who gave it utterance, it could not affect us so much. But God understood it otherwise. Had a voice from heaven, loud as that voice heard by John in the Patmos isle, which was equal to seven thunders united in one, proclaimed its acceptance and application to the whole Jewish nation for centuries to come, the evidence of the fact could not have been greater.

However inexcusable it was in that weak and vacillating judge to pronounce sentence of death against one whom he had first pronounced innocent, or whatever may have been the lot of that judge afterward is not material to us; but the terrible effects of this *imprecation* is too well known and incontrovertible for infidels of the nineteenth century to deny or "laugh down." History has no example of any nation suffering a series of such calamities as befel the Jewish nation soon after that event—the carnage witnessed in Jerusalem during the siege, when *eleven hundred thousand* people perished; indeed, shortly after the sacking of the city, the number in-

creased to over *one million and a half!* Even *crucifixion* was resorted to in order to rid the earth of them; and in such numbers, indeed, that so much wood at length could not be procured as would suffice the people condemned to the dreadful death of the cross, even in Jerusalem, nor places sufficient for the crosses to stand; and all this came upon them by the hands of those very Romans whose judge they had schooled to give sentence against the Prince of Peace. Jerusalem was *trodden down by the Gentiles*, and has never since then come into the possession of the Jews! Behold how the *curse* has pursued them and their posterity in that sentence of universal reprobation and banishment and dispersion over the earth!

Would that some of you who hear me this day had stood with me a few months since under the Arch of Titus in the Forum at Rome, where an impression might have been made upon your minds more enduring than the venerable monument so well adapted to convey it. Walking pensively one day with some friends in the direction of the Colosseum, along the Via Sacra, at the foot of Mount Palatine, we paused beneath an ancient arch of triumph: to the left we beheld in sculpture a Roman hero in his triumphal car, and captives with features unmistakably Jewish; and on the right, the sculptured spoils of the captives. Stepping out in front of the arch, the inscription there told the story:

SENATUS

POPULUSQUE

DIVO TITO DIVI VESPASIANI F

VESPASIANO AUGUSTO.

“The Senate and People of Rome, to the Divine Titus, son of the Divine Vespasian; and to Vespasian the Emperor.”

Poor Jerusalem! here is the monument which celebrated thy overthrow and total destruction, as predicted by thy Messiah, when, from one of thy guardian hills, he looked upon thee and wept, and with words, broken by sobs, he bewailed thy approaching desolation! Unhappy Jews! look upon this arch, and remember the terrible *imprecation*: "*His blood be upon us and our children.*" I marvel not that the "*Jew's path*" runs near this arch, but not underneath it. Many a sigh has been breathed by the outcasts of Israel in passing here, they of "*the wandering foot and weary breast.*" Oh! but it seems as if every stone in that monument, laid there so soon after the terrible event, is mournfully saying:

"Oh! weep for those who wept by Babel's stream,
Whose shrines are desolate, whose land a dream!
Weep for the *harp* of Judah's broken shell,
Mourn, where God hath dwelt, the godless dwell.

"Oh! where shall Israel lave her bleeding feet!
And where shall Zion's songs again seem sweet?
And Judah's melody once more rejoice
The hearts that leapt before the heavenly voice.

"Tribes of the wandering foot, and weary breast,
Where shall ye flee away, and be at rest?
The wild dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind his country, Israel but the grave!"

We returned beneath the arch, and examined the sculpture with mournful interest; *fac-similes* of the *spoils* brought away from the *Temple* at Jerusalem, on the day of its utter destruction, carried away by the command of Titus, as *trophies* to grace his triumphal entry into Rome; the sacred utensils recorded in Exodus xxv., *the golden table of the show-bread, the*

seven-branched golden candlestick, the ark of the covenant, the famous trumpets, etc., etc., sculptured in basso relievo; and a melancholy procession besides of captives, with profiles, as before observed, unmistakably Jewish—portraits, most likely, of some of those who graced the triumph of Titus, and probably of those who cried "*Away with him, crucify him,*" and were the spectators of his death on Calvary. Doubtless they selected the most noble and influential among the captives to stand before the sculptor, while he immortalized in marble their degradation and misery; after which they were dispatched to their work among the stones and mortar of the rising amphitheatre, yonder Colosseum, whose giant carcass is spread out before us at the extremity of the Forum.

Behold the *goodness* and *severity* of God! his severity to the Jews, his once chosen people; his strange and mysterious providence in the instruments of their punishment, and in the fulfilment of the predictions of the Son of God! and after the destruction of the holy city, in delivering over the spoils of the Temple, and even the book of the *law*, to grace the triumph of an idolatrous people in their capital, and allowing them to be deposited in a temple consecrated to the goddess of peace! and, yet, should so ordain that these should be the first people on the earth to receive the Gospel of Christ!

Oh! who among you could have stood *unmoved* before this most interesting of all monumental proofs of the fulfilment of an awful Scriptural prediction!—the result, too, of a horrible, voluntary imprecation, "*His blood be on us and on our children*"—especially if accompanied by such thrilling considerations as the following—oh! that in repeating them to you some of you may be led through divine influence to recon-

sider your views of the atonement, and the felt *obligations* to repentance, faith, gratitude, and obedience, under which the doctrines of the cross of Christ should lay every one of us—that “*His blood be on us and on our children*” may have a wider and more terrible range than the destruction of a capital, the overthrow of a nation, and the banishment of its people. In those fearful words, remarked a French divine, may we not discover the foundation of the terrible mystery of that eternal punishment with which we are threatened in the Scriptures? For, is not the reason, as one of our own divines has observed, found in the blood of Christ, rather in the profanation of it every day? This blood, he continued, is of infinite dignity, and therefore can only be avenged by an infinite punishment; this blood, if we destroy ourselves, will cry eternally against us at the tribunal of God; it will eternally excite the wrath of God against us. This blood, falling upon *lost souls*, will fix a stain upon them that shall never be effaced; torments must consequently never have an end. A *reprobate* in hell will always appear in the eyes of God stained with that blood which he has so basely treated; God will always abhor him; this will make hell.

Nor can I withhold the remarks of another French divine. He said he could not tell what impression the *incarnation* and *sufferings of Christ* made upon his brethren; but for his own part, he would ingenuously own that could anything render Christianity doubtful to him, what it affirms of this mystery would do so; and that he had need of all his faith, and of all the authority of Him who speaks in Scripture, to persuade him that God would condescend to such a humiliation as this; that if amidst the darkness that conceals this mystery, he could

discern a glimmering that reduced it in a sort to his capacity, it arose from the sentence of *eternal punishment*, which God has threatened to inflict upon all who finally reject this great sacrifice;—having allowed the *obligations* under which the *incarnation* lays mankind, he continued, *everlasting punishment* has nothing in it contrary to divine justice; no!—the burning lake with its smoke, eternity with its abyss, devils with their rage, and hell with its horrors, seemed to him not at all too rigorous for the punishment of men who have trodden under foot *the Son of God*, and counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and crucified him afresh, after doing despite to the Spirit of Grace.

But forget not, remarked another, that some poet has spoken to this effect, that to man the *bleeding cross* has promised all, has sworn eternal grace, that He who offered up his *life* there can never deny grace! Ay! to the penitent, believing sinner, rejoined another; but to the *impenitent* it is one of the most ominous and fearful pledges of coming wrath which the surface of Scripture presents. Damascen compared well when he likened the cross of Christ to a *golden key* which opens paradise for us; but if unaccepted by the ungodly, it becomes an *iron key* to open hell! For, eternity only can show how a Saviour freely offered, and deliberately rejected, affects a man's condition in the eternal world!

The cross of Christ! O my impenitent hearer! The cross of Christ! and let it not detract from its glory, for it really does throw a solemn grandeur over it;—while it is, indeed, *the golden sceptre* held out to you this day from heaven, by which you may obtain a greater mercy than King Ahasuerus ever intended when he stretched out that symbol of life or death, the

golden sceptre, to Queen Esther; grace, mercy, forgiveness, holiness, eternal life. Yet, if you spurn this cross—if you neglect that *offering to eternal justice*, once made upon the cross, and the offers of mercy which the doctrines of the cross thus bring to you, that cross—what shall I say to move you?—it will be transmuted into that sword of steel, of which Pollok speaks, whose wrath burns fearfully behind the cursed, as they are driven away from God to Tophet!—and with this motto on that sword, in letters of flame :

“Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not.”

The cross is, to all who obey Him, as *the pillar of cloud* that went before the obedient Israelites through the Red Sea, and on through the wilderness into Canaan. But, alas! if not followed, if neglected, it is at last transformed into the *darkest thunder-cloud of hell*, its thunders uttering words which every guilty conscience echoes back, barring all excuse, as Pollok wisely says again, and throwing the weight of every man's perdition on himself, directly home :

“Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not.”

Oh! well might the apostle say, “*God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*” By the “*cross*,” as I remarked in the beginning, he meant the doctrines of the cross—justification, and present and eternal salvation, through the alone merits of Him who died upon the cross for the sins of the world. It is by the *cross*, thus understood, and not as the Roman Catholics understand it, that the Lord comforts Zion, turns the wilderness into an Eden (to use

the figures of the prophet Isaiah), and the desert into the garden of the Lord—making penitent hearts rejoice with *joy and gladness*, and filling *Zion with thanksgiving, and the voice of melody*. (Isa. liii. 3.) The cross of Christ! Oh! but it is a *harp* of sweeter and more influential music amid a congregation of despairing, but penitent sinners, distracted and torn by the foulest fiends of hell—than the melody of that *harp* by which David charmed away the *evil spirit* which troubled the soul of Saul, king of Israel! For, if

“Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast,”

much more the music of the cross! and many a savage-like sinner have I seen subdued by it; ay, and a *despair*, that tore the soul like an unrelenting savage, soothed and entirely *exorcised* by it!

But alas! poor sinner! if that *cross* be despised here, it becomes the theme to which the *harps* of hell are strung; and, to use another idea of Pollok—for my mind is usually affected by what I happen to read through the day, and I have been reading Pollok’s “*Course of Time*,” and a wonderful poem it is—to use another idea of Pollok, without aspiring to the exact measure of his lines, it is the *theme* to which the harps of grief are strung; and the chorus of the damned, the rocks of hell repeat it evermore, loud echoing through the caverns of despair, and poured in thunder on the ear of *woe*! Perhaps all this is implied in those words—to me terrible words—where John closes the description of hell’s punishment with—“*In the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever.*” (Rev. xvi. 9–11). Ah! poor sinner! you have a

terrible prospect before you! "*Flee from the wrath to come.*" Let your flight into the arms of Christ be immediate; now is the day of salvation, and the day of perdition is very near all the impenitent sinners of our times.

Again, my brethren, I urge your attention to the cross of Christ; and, although I believe heartily with some writer—I forget who—that the *cross* is the great pillar of human hope, bearing the inscription, "*God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life,*" and that upon this monument of love the Almighty has chosen to rest his claim to the eternal *gratitude* of the world!—yes, I do believe all this—but, *he that hath an ear, let him hear*—I believe, also, that if that claim be refused in this world, that cross shall be seen by the damned, looming through the smoke and flames of hell, as the most enduring of all monuments, eternally commemorating the justice of their punishment. Is it not written, "*Christ hath suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust to, bring us to God*"? (1 Pet. iii. 18.) But if we allow *unbelief, ingratitude, impenitency—our sins*—to bring us to hell, we must there suffer for our own sins, and that without remedy. But, ah! sirs, to recollect there that Christ did once suffer upon earth for those very sins for which we are suffering, will double the sufferings, and make a hell of Hell indeed!

No apology do I feel necessary to make this audience for presenting the cross of Christ for your acceptance, with such a *dread alternative*. The doctrine that there was no other alternative than that man must perish in an eternal hell, or Jesus Christ, the Son of God, die in his stead, has always in my view thrown a solemn grandeur as well as terrible significance over

the incarnation and suffering of Christ. Discard that awful fact from the story of the cross, and, I am free to confess, a similar *doubtfulness* to that of the French divine already alluded to, would most certainly assail me; I speak with reverence, that, not without a struggle, if thus embarrassed, could I receive that sentiment of the apostle, "*Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*" Whereas, in view of the endless wretchedness from which the death of Christ saves men, the whole plan of salvation wins the entire confidence and admiration of my reason. This sentiment may appear but of little importance to some superficial minds in this audience; but to me personally, and to my *zeal* in the cause of Christ, it is of the highest importance. It is that, indeed, to which the other alternative is so fearfully linked, that the *non-acceptance* of the doctrines of the cross involves an incarceration in that very hell, to rescue us from which the Son of God died.

"Yes, thou didst die for me, O Son of God!

By thee the throbbing flesh of man was worn;
 Thy naked feet the paths of sorrow trod,
 Thou that wert wont to stand
 Alone on God's right hand,
 Before the ages were, the eternal, eldest born.

"Low bow'd thy head convulsed, and droop'd in death,

Thy voice sent forth a sad and wailing cry;
 Slow struggled from thy breast the parting breath,
 And every limb was wrung with agony—
 That head whose veilles blaze
 Filled angels with amaze,

When at that voice sprang forth the rolling worlds on high."

How it rejoices my heart, dear penitent sinner! to offer

you salvation in that name!—mercy through his atoning blood; forgiveness through the faith of him; justification by faith, and peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. God can be just and the justifier of those who believe in him. All other subjects of human glory are eclipsed by this—sink into insignificance in the presence of this! “*God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

Nor can I close without repeating the sentiments of an eloquent German preacher, which have been passing and repassing before my imagination, like some beautiful painting, or charming landscape, which frequently so daguerreotypes itself upon my imagination, that it passes before me, years afterward, like a moving panorama! Behold the cross! he exclaimed, behold the purple stream of the blood as it falls from the wounds of the crucified Jesus, and bedews the place of torture, and the sinful crowd that surrounds it. That blood yet falls upon the spiritual deserts of our world, and they blossom as the rose. We sprinkle it by faith upon the door-posts of our hearts, and are secure against destroyers and avenging angels. This dew of the atoning blood falls on the ice of the north pole, and the accumulated frozen mass of ages thaws beneath it. It streams down on the torrid zone, and the air becomes cool and pleasant. Where this rain falls, the gardens of God spring up, lilies bloom, and what was black becomes white in the purifying stream, and what was polluted becomes pure as the light of the sun! That which dew and rain is to nature, which without them would soon become a barren waste, the crimson shower which we see falling from the cross is to human minds. There is no possibility of flourishing without it,

no growth nor verdure, but everywhere desolation, barrenness, and death!

He described the mysterious cross as a rock against which the very waves of the curse break—as a lightning conductor, by which the destroying fluid descends, which would have otherwise crushed the world. Jesus, who mercifully engaged to direct the thunderbolt against himself, does so while hanging yonder in profound darkness upon the cross. There he is, as the connecting link between heaven and earth; his bleeding arms extended wide, stretched out to every sinner; hands pointed to the east and west, indicating the gathering in of the world of man to his fold; the cross is directed to the sky, as the place of the final triumph of his work in redemption; and its foot fixed in the earth, like a tree, from whose wondrous branches we gather the fruit of an eternal reconciliation to God the Father!

The *cross*, he continued, the mysterious, the spiritual cross, is the *standard* of the *new covenant*, and when it is understood, it spreads terror around it, no less than delight, and produces lamentation no less than joy and rejoicing. It stands to-day, and it will stand forever, and no more fears those who would overturn it than the staff of Moses feared when those of the magicians hissed around it. Display it where we will, miraculous effects attend it. We carry it through the nations, and, without a blow of the sword, conquer one country after another, and one fortress after another. Look upon our missionary fields, how verdant they become, and a spring-time of the Spirit spreads itself over the heathen deserts. Hark how the harps of peace resound from the isles of the sea! Behold how, between the icebergs of the north, the hearts begin to glow with

the fire of divine love! These changes, these resurrection wonders are wrought by the cross! This shaking in the valley of dry bones comes by the lifting up of the cross. We carry it through the land, and beneath its shade the soul becomes verdant, and the dead revive! Stones melt in its vicinity, rocks rend before it, and waters, long stagnant, again ripple, clear and pure, as if some healing angel had descended into them! Thus spake the eloquent Krummacher in the capital of Prussia! Thus speaks my heart, and almost every heart in this audience; for were you to give expression to your emotions, as if with one voice you would exclaim, "*God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Amen.

CHAPTER LIV.

TO — : THE ART OF PRINTING AND THE BIBLE.



THE first printed book appeared, I believe, in 1457, about thirty-five years before the discovery of America. The Book of Psalms, some say, was the book. The first Bible, with a date, was printed by John Faust, in 1460. The wish of Job, "*O that my words were now written! O that they were printed in a book.*" (Job xix. 23.) If you look at the word "*printed*" in your Hebrew Bible, you will find it וַיִּחְקֹךְ *weyuchakoo*, "And they were caused to be described, traced out, recorded, or registered in a book"—any one of these terms will express Job's meaning, and not *printing* in our sense of the term. The art of printing had no existence in Job's time, nor for nearly *two thousand* years after. Writing was done in ancient times on the leaves of the *papyrus*, the Egyptian flag, on *linen cloth*, and on thin *laminæ* of different substances, and by engraving on large *stones and rocks*. Job, you may read in the next verse, wishes for "*an iron pen*"—a pen with a *steel point*, as some suppose; others, a *chisel*.

2. It was well, doubtless, that the art of printing was so long unknown, that the world might be the better prepared for it; at least during those *fifteen* or *sixteen centuries* required for the completion of the books of the Old and New Testaments. For we are not sure that even the inspired writers would have

been entirely free from a temptation to *verbosity* or *prolixity*, if their writings could have been issued as speedily and cheaply and as profitably as now. Nor are we certain, had the art been discovered a *thousand* years before it was, that the sacred books would not have been overwhelmed, swept away, and buried under the consequent inundation of books, before the world had time to perceive the value of the sacred records.

3. Perhaps the destruction of Ptolemy's Brucian library by fire, with its *four hundred thousand* volumes, may hereafter be traceable to a similar providential design, as also the destruction of Ptolemy's Serapion library by the same element, under the hand of Saracens, by the command of Omar, the conqueror, who said, "The Koran is sufficient, for it comprehends all necessary truths—therefore the library is unnecessary; but if it contain any particulars contrary to the Koran, it should and must be destroyed." Thus was its doom sealed, and the library and its *three hundred thousand volumes* were given to the flames. Eternity may possibly reveal that what was designed for the benefit of the Koran may have been overruled for the advantage of the Bible. Providence sometimes works after this manner. "I hate the books I have written, lest they prevent the reading of the Bible," said a great author. "Away with our books," exclaimed another, "that here may be more room for the Bible."

4. *Copyright* was as much unknown, perhaps, as the art of printing, as book after book of the sacred volume appeared among men; nor were the writers inspired by the hope of immense profits from the sale of a large edition, as among us. Thus, as one observes, we have, humanly speaking, a clue to the fact that the sacred penmen scarcely ever said all that

might have been said—often not so much as now seems to us necessary, frequently leaving the supply of a word to the reader, or to draw his own inferences or conclusions. Besides, sir, the advantage of a book reasonable in size was of great advantage to the world *financially*—to those early ages especially—before the facilities of the press were known. Mark here also the wisdom of Divine Providence! for, had the size of the Bible been in proportion to the number and importance of its *themes*, it would have been put quite out of the reach of the masses of society, who are usually too poor to purchase an expensive work—to say nothing of their unwillingness to lay out a large sum upon a book for which naturally they can have but little affection, and too expensive by far for philanthropists to give away. Nor could Bible societies have done much in this way. Thus the Bible would have been confined to a few great libraries, as it was, indeed, in the time of Luther, in the university of Erfurth, and another copy which he found in the convent of St. Augustine, but *chained* to a desk. Fragments of the Bible might have been distributed among the people, but at the peril of mutilations, interpolations, and error. In the thirteenth century, *one hundred and fifty years* before the art of printing was discovered in Holland, a neatly written Bible cost in England £30, or one hundred and fifty dollars, which, at that age, would have cost a poor laboring man *thirteen years'* toil to have procured. The building of a couple of arches in the great London Bridge at the same period cost *five pounds* sterling less than the purchase of a Bible. Had that book then been as large as you propose, how enormous the expense! Now that the press is at our command, the present age might contrive to overcome the difficulty; but, pity on

the *past!* Building of bridges costs more in our day and the Bible less! I thank God for that!

* * * * *

Thanks for your kind communication! It was Augustine that said, "Away with our books, that room may be made for the book of God!"—a sentiment that required a "note of comment." Luther wished that all his books were burned, fearing that they had tempted men to read them in preference to the Holy Scriptures—a doubtful wish; for his writings had a remarkable effect in preparing the way for the Reformation, and carrying it forward; besides, by them, the people were led to search the Scriptures whether these things were so. Extremes are injurious. Your notion, if carried out, would put an end to *preaching*, and should lead you to fling away this paper upon which I traced these thoughts. I advise to no such extremes. Let the Bible have the first place in your affections and confidence, and a due proportion of your time. There is to be gained by reading other books a better knowledge of the meaning of Scripture, and the adaptation of the Bible to the wants of the world. Even the *secular papers* are not without their use; they illustrate the Bible, and show you how God is governing the world! They are the heralds of Divine Providence; therefore do not despise them!

The abandonment of all other books for the Bible might be to you a great loss in one respect: should you happen to misunderstand or misapply a passage, you might, perchance, be abandoned to irreclaimable bigotry, or to some pernicious error. In more senses than one, I have thought, we may exclaim with an old author, "Deliver me from a man of one


book." Such are to be found, and, if in *error*—for a man may be in error even with the Bible in his hand—they are most difficult cases to deal with. Luther himself, when only partially delivered from the superstitions of Popery, gave Zuinglius and the other reformers immense trouble in the council, with his finger on "*This is my body*," "*This is my blood*," insisting absolutely upon the *literal* meaning! The reflection that other minds of superior advantages than your own, and possessing a more extensive acquaintance with the Scriptures, may lessen the force of your impression.

Certain it is, those books should be *avoided* that would unfit your mind for reading the Bible with pleasure, or render the precious volume insipid or distasteful to you, as in the case of that person whose experience in such matters is before me. He says that on entering the parlor of a friend he approached a table upon which lay several books. To while away the time he took up a volume, one of Sir Walter Scott's novels, and began turning over its leaves carelessly. Fixing upon a page, his mind became interested and feelings excited, which increased every moment, alternately swayed with merriment or anxiety and fear. The sayings and doings of the characters depicted there so possessed him, that he laughed with those who laughed, and wept with those who wept. Finally, as the plot began to thicken, his emotions deepened, until the beating of his heart shook the book in his hand. In an agony of suspense, to use his own words, his mind, with the avidity of a famished tiger, seized upon each successive thought, his eye travelling page after page over, and as the writer gave the finishing stroke to his story, his feelings and tears, which had been pent up during the reading, broke loose. Resigning him-

self to his emotions, and indulging in some gilded creations of his own imagination, suggested by the tale he had read, when leaning with his arm on the table, his eye followed his hand, which without any design rested upon a hitherto unnoticed Bible. "Suddenly," says he, "I started as if an adder had stung me, or as if a dagger had pierced my heart!—an adder had indeed stung me, but that adder was the thought, How indifferently do I usually read this book! Here I have been reading with interest intense, and weeping over scenes and events which I know to be false and unimportant, while often with a cold heart and a tearless eye I read in this book the account of facts that involve, not only my own, but the eternal destiny of the whole world—facts of so much moment, that the angels themselves once hushed their shouts to examine, and gazed upon with voiceless amazement; facts of so dreadful an import, that the dark brow of demons gathered, and still gather a darker shade of malignity as they look upon them from the dark dungeons of their eternal prison-house! I felt guilty—guilty, not so much from the circumstance of reading the tale and being carried away by its exciting scenes, as by the conviction of the cold indifference with which I had read that precious volume."

CHAPTER LV.

TO THE SAME—THE BIBLE.

Y all means! "*Search the Scriptures.*" It is the command of Jesus, and the reward is sure. That learned man found it so, who declared there were really but two new books in the world, the Bible and Euclid. By habituating yourself to its study, and making it the grand test of all books you may think proper to peruse, you will preserve yourself from much evil and imposition. Besides, whatever of praiseworthy sentiment you may happen to find in other books, it will strengthen your faith to trace it to your Bible. It was thus the great and good Mr. Jay learned to discern that the Bible is the *fountain*, other books only the *streams*—and streams are seldom entirely free from something of the quality of those soils through which they flow.

2. The Bible has had a wonderful history. If the study of history shall form a part of our employments in heaven, as some think, the history of the Bible will be included, and will be interesting beyond imagination! Perhaps that incident on the coast of Scotland may open for us hereafter a fine theme of heavenly contemplation. It was a night of storm, and terrible, and the morning presented the elements in terrific commotion along the perilous coast, appalling the stoutest heart.

Those who had read Virgil's description, might well repeat it behind the shelter of a rock :

“ The Father of the gods his glory shrouds
Involved in tempest and a night of clouds ;
And from the middle darkness flashing out
By fits he deals the fiery bolts about ;
Earth feels the motion of her angry God,
Her entrails tremble, and her mountains nod,
And flying beasts in forests seek abode ;
Deep horror seizes every human breast,
Their pride is humbled, and their fears confess'd ;
While he from high his rolling thunder throws,
And fires the mountains with repeated blows ;
The rocks are from their old foundations rent,
The winds redouble and the rains augment ;
The waves on heaps are dash'd against the shore,
And now the woods, and now the billows roar.”

Providence seemed to unloose its grasp of the mighty winds, to perform their evil will with fury—when a great ship, in melancholy outline, loomed up, swinging in the arms of raging winds and waves—disabled, unmanagable, and hurled headlong toward the breakers. Had you been on board that ship you might have seen one—a sailor—carefully girdling his waist with that in which appeared a somewhat bulky parcel, like the returning Californian and his *gold-belt*. But who cared for him, or what he did, while death stared in the face all on board ! The decisive moment arrived, when that ship was in the giant arms of the breakers. The groaning vessel surrendered to her fate, and went to pieces. Sailor after sailor perished—all on board, in fact, except one—and he, nearly naked, half-drowned, entangled midst ropes and drifting spars, was cast on shore, and

lay stretched on the sands. *Tearful eyes* were there, and willing hands, to administer reviving cordials, and not without success! A small parcel tied round his loins in a folded handkerchief, was noticed and untied. It contained a *Bible*, the gift of a father, on the blank leaf of which was a prayer for the welfare of his sailor-boy; and that Bible bore marks of having been well read, and often, and with tears.

The Bible, spread before many an ancient preacher, has witnessed the effects of the Gospel preached to listening thousands, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven! It has been in scenes of famine, pestilence, earthquake, fire and sword—on the field of blood, midst “the crash and agony of mortal fray,” midst hail of iron and rain of blood; midst a storm of bullets hurled against the heavenly face of man, itself pierced, as well as dying thousands; as in the case of that young soldier, upon whose person was a Bible: the ball penetrated as far as Eccles. xi. 9, and there stopped. He had been a profligate up till then; but seeing this, he repented, and found mercy, and afterward declared with deep emotion that the Bible had been the salvation of his body as well as his soul! It was the rule of the army that each soldier should carry a Bible into the field. Another soldier, in another engagement, received a bayonet thrust, or rather the Bible received it, which perforated *fifty-two* of its leaves, and thereby saved his life. He wore the Bible, it seems, over his heart, between his coat and waistcoat.

Oh! what a history is attached to the Bible as the companion of man through his earthly pilgrimage! It has been in prisons oft, and perished in the flames with martyrs; has been consulted by the tried and the tempted, the happy and the

miserable—by the young and the old, in all ages of the world. It has been the solace of the widow, and the stay of the *orphan*—even of those two little orphans, one thirteen and the other eleven, on their way to Liverpool to seek the protection of an *uncle*. Their father and mother had both died in London, of typhus fever. These children were noticed sitting by the wayside, hungry and penniless, and yet refusing *five shillings* offered them for their Bible, clinging to it, though six shillings were offered them for it by a stranger. Poor boys! young as they were, it had been the means of making them acquainted with Christ and true happiness, and part with it they would not; besides, it was a Sabbath-school gift. The stranger, only wishing to test them, tried their faith yet further, by suggesting that perhaps their *uncle* would not take them in—then what would they do? One of them replied, “Our Bible says that when father and mother forsake us, then the Lord will take us up.” Tears rushing to the eyes of the stranger, prevented him from saying more. He and the two orphans wept together, and in him they found a friend. That night the little orphans knelt in prayer, in a comfortable room, arose refreshed in the morning, and pursued their way to Liverpool. I should like to know their future history. Perhaps we may read yet more of it, when studying the history of this book in heaven.

In the hand of a wounded sailor, an aged sailor, as he lay in his bunk, was a Bible. The ship had passed out of a sharp fight at sea. The action was severe; many were badly wounded, some mortally. Fifteen or twenty years had passed away since that Bible came into his possession, and all that time the secret weight of a murder pressing home upon his heart. In the following, you have the substance of what was related

as a fact: The dying old sailor had been very wicked in the early part of his life, and characterized by frequent spells of intoxication. In one of his drunken freaks, when in port, he flung his little boy (three years of age) into the sea, because he cried for bread, and he had none to give him. After the deed he staggered away. The child, doubtless by divine interposition, by some means seized a floating plank, and on it drifted out to sea. The little fellow was noticed from the deck of a vessel, and rescued from a watery grave. Touched with his helpless condition, the sailors on board adopted the out-cast, and, growing up among them, he became an able seaman, and finally was promoted and made officer on board, if I remember aright, a ship of war. The wretched drunkard who had thus rid himself of his boy, sobered after a little, with a sad weight upon his conscience, which he dare not tell any one. A benevolent lady, struck with his appearance, presented him with a Bible, and he went to sea again, taking it with him. He read it, and pondered, and by its instructions prayed, and found his way to the feet of a merciful Saviour. He continued much at sea, and became aged. After the action, as he lay dying, a young officer was attracted toward him with peculiar interest, and waited upon him and procured him comforts. The old sailor, drawing near his end, in token of his gratitude presented the young officer with his old Bible, as a keepsake, begged him to listen while he relieved his mind of a tale of woe, told him how he had drowned his boy, and of the gift of that Bible, and what it had done for his soul. It was the father confessing to his son! Mutual recognition took place, and the old sailor expired in the arms of his honored and deeply affected son. The body was committed to the deep


to await the resurrection. The son examined the Bible, which bore the mark of the British and Foreign Bible Society. He, too, read the book, was led a humble penitent to Christ, found mercy, and became a preacher of the Gospel. The remainder of the story belongs, perhaps, to our future readings in the history of the Bible when we reach heaven.

Millions of such incidents belong to Bible history. The recording angel has, doubtless, immortalized them—your own remarkable case among them! Continue to *search the Scriptures*, and love them while you search; have faith in what you find by searching, and prove by practice that you have not searched them in vain; and expect eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. If God shall call you to extensive usefulness in his cause, here is my prayer for you:

“Furnished out of thy treasury,
Oh! may he always ready stand,
To help the souls redeemed by thee,
In what their various states demand:
To teach, convince, correct, reprove;
And build them up in holiest love!”

CHAPTER LVI.

TO THE SAME—THE BIBLE AND ITS AUTHOR.

E it so!—sail, or swim, or dive! the Bible admits of all or any. You may sail or swim for pleasure or spiritual delight, or *dive* for pearls or intellectual profit. Those who practise the former, to the neglect of the latter, remind one too much of those summer insects which skip about only to dimple the surface of the water; but there are others, like skilful divers, who descend into the profoundest depths, or deep as they can in those inspired waters, and enrich themselves with pearls of divine truth, which angels desire to look into! The former class are apt to be superficial in their piety and ideas. The latter, on the contrary, enter into “*the deep things of God,*” possess a moral grandeur both in intellect and character, live to some purpose, and make their mark on the generation around them.

To one of your observations, I reply: You will find it thus as you proceed. The sea is not all of a depth, neither is the Bible. The sky is not so brilliant with stars in some parts as in others. The *sun* does not traverse the northern sky, nor the *moon*; but the *aurora borealis*, or *northern lights*, are there, and the polar star, so useful to the sailor when computing his northern latitude. As in astronomy all parts of the sky are essential, so in theology all parts of the Bible have their use,

and are essential for the proper understanding of the will and ways of God. The *moon*, some nights, appears quite in our neighborhood, so near does she appear. The *sun* seems at a greater distance, as he really is. There are *stars*, too, which make nearer approaches to our homes and hearts; while others in the *stellar* arrangement are at immeasurable distances from us. And there are depths in space of deeper, darker blue—rather altitudes, which no telescope can unfold or astronomical eye measure or investigate. It is thus that some parts of the Bible approach so much nearer our bosoms, business, and homes than others—those parts especially which lie quite beyond the range of all our faculties, although accessible to our faith. The sea has depths which the sailor's plummet has never fathomed; and the sky has altitudes which the astronomer's telescope has never yet explored. Who but a fool would take these facts as arguments against God being the author of such a creation? Apply this thought to the Bible, and you have my idea!

The Bible, sir, like that ocean of water below, and that ocean of space above, unconquered, unfallen, untired, unstained, unpolluted, unexplored, unchanged, tremendous, bowing to no name, yielding to no power, acknowledging no might, trembling before no authority but that of God Almighty, immense, unconstrained, illimitable, image of eternity, reinless, fathomless, alone, in gloom or glory, alone! throne of the Invisible, endless, boundless, sublime, amenable to the will and laws of the Eternal One alone, to him alone yielding homage, warring with man so frequently, because man is so frequently at war with its Sovereign God—glorious, terrible!

“Where rolls the Almighty's thunder word.”

But such is our Bible ; that Book of books, as its Author is King of kings, God over all, blessed for ever ! Amen !

Another of your " observations " merits notice. You will learn the fact more and more as you peruse the Scriptures, that there is an *obvious* meaning, that is, an evident or easily discovered sense ; and a *spiritual* meaning, which requires a class of renewed and spiritual faculties to perceive and appreciate. The *letter* and the *spirit of* Scripture is a good distinction ; like the *scroll* which the prophet Ezekial saw, which was written within and *without*—*without* in the evident, *within* in the hidden, spiritual meaning, requiring care, patience, and the closest attention. Proceed, my dear friend, without hurry of spirit. Entertain no weak ambition to read the Bible through in a short space of time. Those who indulge in this spirit receive but little good, and have but a superficial knowledge. They do not, as they might, "*taste the good word of God ;*" nor have they time, like the Psalmist, to "*find wonderful things in the law.*" Ponder words and sentences, figures and metaphors. It is thus you will learn to say with one, that other books are but waste paper when compared with the Bible. It bears its own peculiar and heavenly stamp and character and spirit, which never can be successfully imitated or counterfeited. It is by these that Divine Providence has chiefly secured its preservation.

It is your duty to read other books ; for thereby you may gain much information, and a better understanding of the word of God. Besides, I like to know what the world is about, and what its great men are thinking about. But then, without asking their leave, I take them aside, and test or try them by the Scriptures. I commend a similar course to you ; and

also with regard to the *sermons* which you hear, and the *opinions* which may be current in your own neighborhood or circle: bring them all under the inquisition of the Bible! God has bestowed upon you the excellent gift of reason for this very purpose. The Bereans, we read in Acts xvii. 2, won the title of real *nobility* by so doing: "*These were more NOBLE than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so; therefore many of them believed, also of the honorable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few.*" Herein you may discover a thorough Protestant principle, a principle which, sooner than abandon, the people of England, and of the United States of America, would see their respective countries drenched in blood. Amen! for the glory of those lands is entirely involved in this principle.

All sermons, books, and opinions of a religious character profess, or should do so, to be but transcripts of the will of God, as revealed in the Scriptures of truth. By that standard, therefore, we have a just right to try them. We consider the copy of a *deed* or *record* of no further use than as it agrees with the *original* deed or record. This is a *legal* idea, but it is truly in place here! We are commanded in the Scriptures to "*try the spirits whether they be of God;*" for there are spirits as well as doctrines which are not of God. Nor should we forget to pray for that "*unction from the Holy One,*" of which St. John speaks, and that "*anointing which abideth, which we receive of Him.*" And always decide, just as obstinately as you please, that whatever contradicts the plain declarations of the word of God cannot be of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

And you have been "tempted" too! Ay! and now you begin to feel and know, what you once doubted, that there is a devil, and a malicious one. While you obeyed him, and drifted with the stream of your unrenewed nature, he did not oppose you, of course. But a changed nature, with reversed tendencies, has awakened Satan: "Now I shall lose this sinner if I deal with a slack hand!" By learning to *will* only what *God wills*, you have come to learn the force of Satan's will. And if he had ability equal to his malignity, he would quite overthrow you. But, thank God, though his *malice* be *infinite*, we know that his power is *finite*! And equally comfortable is the knowledge that "*He who is for us is greater than all who are against us!*" Glory be to God for this assurance! Be courageous, my friend, and march forward. Satan expects to be bruised under your feet shortly, therefore he bruises you; although he cannot but know that the more he bruises you, the more he shall be bruised, by and by, himself.

"*The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,*" take that and use it against Satan. He dreads it, ever since Jesus Christ tried its edge against him, three times during his temptation in the wilderness. (Matt. iv.) "*It is written.*" Oh! but that was indeed "the jewelled hilt whose diamonds did light the passage of the blade!" The blade, under your hand, is a promise, a threatening, or a doctrine, to which, in a moment of time, you can attach the *hilt*, "*It is written.*" Thus furnished, my brother, so lately found in Christ, lay this sword around you with heart and in faith, and with the energy of another Samson. If that old hero slew "heaps upon heaps" of Philistines with "*the jaw-bone of an ass,*" what may not you accom-

plish against the Philistines of hell, with the *Spirit's sword!* I tell you, my friend, the old Leviathan of Hell dreads a Christian thus armed, more than his old namesake of the deep, the famous little *sword-fish!*

As to those who rebut the doctrine of *eternal punishment* by texts which never were designed to prove that doctrine, but rather something else—namely, that sinners may escape if they will, by a timely repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ—never mind them! They are, in themselves, convicted of their own *sophistry*. The more you know of such men, you will find that this habit of *dodging Scripture* is but a part and parcel of their spiritual tactics, to deceive others, and befool and ruin themselves! Speak of “*the wrath of God,*” and “*the justice of God,*” and they dodge behind his *mercy*, and will make it appear that you deny his mercy, while you do nothing of the sort. Quote his *threatenings*, and they will instantly array against your inferences his *promises!* A mode of reasoning, to use the ideas of another, as if to your remark that an anchor falling into the sea will sink to the bottom, another opposes the notion, by stating, what you do not deny, that a *ship* will float on the surface. You tell him that *arsenic* is poison, but he insists that it has a *sweet* taste, and will have you talk about its sweetness, and not of its *poisonous* qualities. It is as if you were speaking of a certain *judge*, that in case of conviction he will sentence the criminal to punishment, and you are opposed by the idea that the judge loves his own children, and you are libelling the paternal character! If you cite “*a just God and a Saviour,*” they will lay their heads upon the second part and go to sleep, and dream that the other is a lie!

Always remember, brother, that there are Bible readers

who very much resemble some small *shopkeepers*, whose capital being small in their line of business, you find them dealing in a limited assortment of articles; while other readers of the Bible are like large or wholesale traders or merchants, who have a general assortment of goods. Some shops present you with a tempting array of confectionery, candies, gingerbread, etc., etc., but none of the substantial elements of life: a great difference between such and those traders who advertise "a general assortment of goods, wholesale and retail." There are readers who trade only in the *sweetmeats* of the Scriptures, *declarations* which commend the promises, and *promises* which illustrate the declarations, and these they deal out to everybody, without respect to character. But they will have nothing to do with *declarations* which defend the threatenings of God, nor with *threatenings* which vindicate his declarations. Without any scruple whatever, they will even "*take the children's bread and give it to dogs!*" We meet such small traders everywhere, and nothing else will they keep in their shop. They cannot afford to have it otherwise. The Lord have mercy on them, and open their eyes before it is too late! But the Bible has readers, who, like those large and general traders, deal equally in both the promises and threatenings of God.

Several heresies of our times arise from mistaken and partial views of God's character. God has reason, if he thought proper, to thunder from the heavens in the ears of men that declaration in the fiftieth Psalm: "*Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.*" Or, as he spake by the prophet Isaiah, "Their fear of me is taught by the precepts of

men"—not such a fear as Paul afterward so faithfully declared : " *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ; for our God is a consuming fire.*" " *Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.*" This is really tracing error up to its source—thinking God to be altogether such as themselves. Pagan idolatry, and the wretched character of their gods, may be traced to this error. What our Lord said of the Samaritans, "Ye worship ye know not what," is truly applicable to many *errorists* of our day.

Such a God as would suit some, must strongly resemble old Eli, the high priest, who quietly said to his wicked sons, " *Why do ye such things? For I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear ; ye make the Lord's people to transgress.*" Yet he corrected them not, nor deposed them from office, till at last he himself was deposed, falling backward from his chair broken-hearted, and broke his own neck in the fall. Such a very harmless God, smiling with complacency upon all sorts of sin and sinners, without disposition or power to *punish* in that eternity to which they are hastening, would suit a large class of men admirably ! They would wade to their knees in blood to defend the faith of such a God, were they entirely sure that such a being existed. I need not tell you, this is not the God of the Bible. But if we ask them to look over or through certain *texts* which would give them a correct view of God, they refuse as significantly as the bigoted philosopher in Florence, who refused to look at the heavens through one of Galileo's telescopes, lest he should happen to see something up there that would disturb his belief in his own system of philosophy.

A *full-orbed* view of God, such as the Scriptures afford, is the grand method provided to cure such errors. But they tell us the Bible is a great book, and that they have no time to devote to the *herculean* task—that they select such passages as happen to fall in with their notions of the Supreme Being, and those “at second hand,” poor souls, from the lips of some preacher or other, or neighbor, leaving a closer investigation of the subject to those who have more time upon their hands, or a taste for such matters—that they have gathered enough to satisfy them. And yet, how dogmatically they will assert their opinions! How impatient of contradiction! How careless as to the risk they are running! Nevertheless, if you find one of these about to purchase *property*, with what scrutiny he will examine every part of the *title-deed* which conveys it to him; a single *omission* might be a serious loss. “*An indisputable title,*” too, or he will have nothing to do with it! It is with such persons as with a man who happens to have a strange prejudice against seeing the *moon* at the full, because that being the time when crazy folks are at the worst. He has no great liking for the moon at the change either, from a similar crotchet he has got in his head! But having had a glimpse some years ago of the moon in her *first quarter*, he says that was enough for him, and further acquaintance with that luminary was quite unnecessary—might deprive him of his senses altogether; and so persists to speak and think of the moon only in the *first quarter*; while the truth is, he prefers not to think of her at all! It is thus you may learn to understand and pity some of your neighbors. Thus they prefer to think of God, from some partial glimpses they have had of his character; but a further acquaintance with him would be disagree-

able. “*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear ; but now mine eye seeth thee ; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes !*” Such was Job’s exclamation after a great discovery of God. By *tradition*, and other imperfect sources of information, he had learned something of God ; had obtained some partial views of his holiness and justice. But now a clearer view quite overwhelms him. He *sees* what he never saw before, and therefore *feels* what he never felt before, and repents in dust and ashes. But for the general uprightness of Job’s character, according to the light he had, and the sincerity of his heart, he would have *abhorred* this view of God as much as he abhorred himself, and, like your *neighbors*, deprecated any more such terrible revelations of the divine character. But ah ! how terrible, then, to the sinful soul must be the first flashes of this discovery, on its entrance into eternity !

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No ! It was best to stop just where I did. I believe with Virgil that every theme, light and trivial, as well as weighty and important, wants a wide field and long ; that the tongue of man is voluble, and that as we speak, so shall we hear again ! A fool may receive an answer equal to his folly, but a reply may be expected of like nature, and so a great dust is raised about nothing. I had other uses for my time. Besides, the sentiment of the hero in the Iliad occurred :

“But wherefore should we longer waste our time
In idle prate, while *battle roars around* ?”

In behalf of Christians, a few words for the circle in the “*conversazione*.” Philosophers, in assembly, once replied to a musician that they could be merry without music ; and one

would think these might be merry without sporting with the characters of Christians and their humble *preacher*. They should remember that when the Philistines called in blind and disabled Samson to make sport for them, they paid dearly for it. The Samsons are not all dead yet, nor the locks of the strength shorn. Blessed be God!

They seem fond of similes. Here is one, as if it had been written expressly for them: "Suppose you stood by a dangerous mire, through which was a narrow track of firm ground, and should see a company of poor creatures sinking and almost swallowed up, on the one hand and on the other; and yet you should see them laughing and jeering at those who kept on the narrow track of firm ground: would you not say, they are all mad and bewitched?" They are cute enough to understand the figure, therefore I leave it with them, "without note or comment!"—unless they should deny its application; in which case I would commend to their consideration those lines of an old poet:

"Well, sleep on now, and take thy soft reposes;
But know, withal, sweet tastes have sour closes;
And he repents on thorns that sleeps on roses!"

To some of the more serious among them I would say, if they would be so good as to define their notions of "pulpit style," and, if they desire Gospel at all, how they think it should be preached, one could better understand them. I have some impression, I fancy, of their meaning, and what would be acceptable, but I forbear for the present.

A few remarks, however, in *that direction*, may not be amiss. In St. Paul's times, the Jews required a sign, and the

Greeks sought after wisdom ; but he minded the prejudices of neither, but preached *Christ crucified*, though to the one it was a *stumbling-block*, and *foolishness* to the other. It quite satisfied him that to some of his hearers, both Jews and Greeks, his preaching was “ *Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God !* ” My compliments to the circle, and say *my* belief is this, that *sincerity* and *simplicity* should be pulpit companions ; nor do I ever wish to separate them from my heart and lips. Indeed, I could not, if I would—that is, retain one and dismiss the other ; when one goes, I do not see how the other can stay ! Certain classes of hearers do not well understand these things. But I have no taste, nor should they, for *straining* at things which do not lie near unto us, and, as it were, natural to us—*bombastry* is the word—a sort of bastard eloquence (excuse me) ; or, if you like it better, a stretching and swelling of words beyond the capacity of an idea. It was said of one that his words were all *forty-seven pounders*, but too big for the *sentences* in which they appeared ! Worse still when it happens that the *words* altogether outgrow the *ideas* of the preacher !

Such persons as those which daily cross your path will give you plenty to do in that line, if you mind them ; *proud, knowing, question-sick persons*, as Paul calls them. The original of 1 Tim. vi. 4 will sustain this construction. Their notions of God are crude and confused, and can do you no good. God, as one justly observes, is not *eternity* nor *infinity*, but he is eternal and infinite. He is not *duration* nor *space*, but he endures and is present—constitutes, so to speak, duration and space, eternity and infinity. Besides, if mind, sound, stones, flavor are impervious to our penetration or comprehension,

how much more the mode and manner of the divine existence ! “ *No man hath seen God at any time,*” says Jesus. “ *God is a spirit,*” he declared on another occasion. If we cannot see him with our natural eyes, nor comprehend him with our understanding, we may feel his presence in our spirits and his love in our hearts. Oh ! let us be ambitious rather to love, adore, and obey, than to comprehend *the Incomprehensible*.

The belief in a God we may trace back into the most ancient times—no nation without some form of religion, none professing atheism. Calvin, in his “ *Institutes,*” observes of idolatry itself, that men would rather have false gods than none. They will rather worship anything than nothing ! And so it was, according to the Bible : when there were but three men in the world, we find two of them offering sacrifices to God, taught, doubtless, by the third. A quick, lively *soul* in a sick, dying body, was, in ancient times, a proof of God, and of the immortality of the soul. God leaves not himself without a witness. We see the sun by his own light, and God may be seen by his own light, through air and sky and solid ground—the *glory* of God, of which, according to the Psalmist, the earth and sea are full, and the heavens themselves declare. Far from us be the thought that the world is left without an enlightening God ; as soon may we believe in a *sunless* universe.

Man must have a God, and a religion of some sort ; he is a religious creature, although a depraved creature. “ *Pass over the earth,*” says Plutarch, “ *you may discover cities without walls, without literature, without monarchs, without palaces or wealth, where the theatre and the school are not known ; but no man ever saw a city without temples and gods, where*

prayers and oaths and oracles and sacrifices were not used for obtaining good or averting evil." This eminent writer, you may remember, resided at Rome during the reign of the Emperor Trajan.

That little incident in the life of Napoleon Bonaparte is worthy of regard. During the French Revolution, the churches were all closed, and the clergy deprived of their functions. When Napoleon came into power he reopened the churches and reinstated Christianity: although strongly inclined to skepticism himself, he more than once avowed the propriety and necessity of what he had done. One evening, when walking on the terrace of the garden of his favorite villa Malmaison, he observed to the company present, eminent persons, among whom was Volney, the celebrated infidel: "Religion is a principle which cannot be eradicated from the heart of man." And, looking up to the sky, which was clear and starry, he said, "Who made all that?" and added, "But last Sunday evening I was walking here alone, when the church bells of the village of Rueil rang at sunset; I was strongly moved, so vividly did the image of early days come back with that sound. If it be thus with me, what must it be with others?" But it is only the real Christian who realizes the truth of Fenelon's remark, that the Christian's life is a long and continual tendency of the heart toward that eternal goodness which he desires on earth. Indeed, all his happiness consists in thirsting after it, and this thirst is prayer; this desire, he added, to approach the Creator, inspires never-ceasing prayer, and this consists simply in raising the heart to God. What a beautiful comment on that declaration of Jesus, "*Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled!*"

and those words of Paul, "*Pray without ceasing*"! Ponder these remarks, my friend; they will do you more good than those doting speculations and strife of words, which do but engender strife and unbelief.

Time admonishes me to stop here; yet a caution upon another subject may be profitable to you, circumstanced as you are. What they require is simply an impossibility; therefore be not troubled about an answer. It would perplex and confound the wisest brains in Christendom to conceive of the manner in which *something* was created out of *nothing*—*existence* from *non-existence*. "*In the beginning God CREATED the heavens and the earth.*" (Gen. i. 1.) Compare with Heb. xi. 3: "*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*" What a striking comment on the word "*created*," which signifies *to make out of nothing*! But mark! It is a subject for *faith*, that is, for *belief*, and not *comprehension*: "*through faith we understand*;" that none of the things which do appear were made out of *preëxistent matter*; faith in God can easily understand how the *power* of God could bring *being* out of *nonentity*.

The *manner* of such a creation, *how* it was done, lies quite out of the province of the human understanding; yet, that the *power* of God could and did *create* all things out of nothing is quite within the comprehension of faith! Indeed, the *contrary* is the most difficult to believe of the two, encumbered in fact with absolute absurdities and contradictions.

That your "*querists*" have most of the ancient philosophers on their side, is likely enough. They saw plainly "that nothing was or could be created out of nothing;" hence their

dogma of the eternity of matter. You may remind them, however, that the wisest portion of these ancients admitted the existence of a God from eternity. The even went so far as this, to allow his nature to be not only distinct from matter, and underived, but that he *created* the qualities and properties of matter.

At this point their faith failed; for we find them staggering back upon the old dogma, the eternity of matter—soon, however, to rally again, under the force of what appears to be a primitive or intuitive idea in man—of a God, self-existent, possessing all power to create, uphold, and govern all things. That we find them again in collision with this idea, and denying that God either did or could create the original matter of the universe out of nothing, cannot be denied; nor that it involved them in endless disputes and contradictions, and even the greatest absurdities; to escape from which they took refuge in the belief of an endless variety of gods, furnishing most convincing proof of that declaration of the inspired word, "*The world by wisdom knew not God.*" (1 Cor. i. 21.) We are quite satisfied, therefore, to remain steadfast in our belief in the Mosaic account of the Creation.

CHAPTER LVII.

TO——: THE SCRIPTURES DEFENDED.



IT is one thing to wall oneself around with the *promises* of God, and another to intrench behind the *sophistries* of infidelity. Beware how you treat the Scriptures. If the Almighty called unto Moses, when impelled by curiosity to rush forward irreverently to examine the phenomenon of a bush in a blaze, burning on and yet unconsumed, "*Moses, Moses! Draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground,*" we may well suppose that he desires to see us approach his *holy word* reverently, and tread with solemnity the awfully pleasing walks of inspiration.

2. Indeed, sir, I know of no surer sign that God intends to destroy a sinner, than when he leaves him to jest with his word without compunction. That young man had a narrow escape, rely upon it, who was seized with trembling when about to offer indignity to the Bible, exclaiming to his companions, with a faltering voice, "We will not burn that book until we get a better." It had been agreed among his companions that one of their number should, in their presence, lay the Bible on the fire; and the lot fell upon him. But some restraining grace yet remained in his heart, and God did not leave him to commit the damning offence. He had, indeed, actually laid

hold upon it, but in doing so, a paleness gathered on his cheek, a strong tremor seized his heart, and the Bible was returned to its place, with those words upon his lips, "We will not burn that book until we get a better." He is in his grave now. Contempt for God's word had occupied his heart. An insult to it was in his intention. It was, perhaps, what St. John calls "*a sin unto death,*" in the unfinished sense, forfeiting the life of his body, while mercy yet remained for his soul. That mercy it is hoped he found. He died not long after, a true penitent.

3. The Bible, though "a dreary enclosure of weeds" to you and your companions, is an Eden of flowers to us. Though a thing of insipidity to you, it is full of the *honey of knowledge* to us, wherewith we fill every cell of our affections and understanding. Thus, sir, like bees in their hives, we lay that up in our hearts, which is better than silver or gold in the winter of adversity: "*More to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold,*" said the Psalmist; "*sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb.*" He was speaking of "*the judgments of the Lord,*" of his *law*, his *statutes*, and his *commandments*; adding, "*Moreover, by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.*" Do you wonder, then, that we are so attached to the precious volume?

4. We love also the *writings* of the great and the good of our own and past ages. They also are "*like the smell of a field which God hath blessed,*" redolent with the sunshine and fragrance of heaven. But the Bible is our garden of Eden, where we walk with God, and regale ourselves with all manner of fruit, and have free access to "*the tree of life, which grows in the midst of the garden,*" and to "*the tree of knowledge.*" Here

we recreate, and grow in grace and knowledge, and in sweet expectation of being translated by-and-by to the Eden above! We part with the Eden of Scripture when about to take possession of that. "Take my Bible from me, keep it safe, and let it not gather dust; I can read it no more!" said a godly dying mother to her daughter, a few moments before she expired.

5. There is a system of *medicine* which rejects the fragrance of *flowers*, because supposed to hinder the operation of its remedies. There are systems of *error* which reject the beautiful flowers of inspiration, for a similar reason, I suppose. Those who are tinctured with certain infidel remedies, are singularly averse to them. Is it not so with yourself? I confess to a fondness for the flowers of Scripture. They do set off a sermon well, sir, and shed a sweet *perfume* through all the Church of God. That you profess an insensibility to such *fragrance*, is not to be wondered at. If it does not neutralize the effect of the nostrums you have been taking, why, not unlikely, those nostrums have neutralized the effects of that fragrance—that is all! The excellent Mr. Jay, of Bath—that ornament of your country, and glory of his denominational pulpit—it was said of him that he revelled like a honey-bee among the flowers of Scripture, to the annoyance of some, it seems, who, from causes best known to themselves, expressed disrelish for such a profusion of them in his discourses. But one of a different taste made the charming remark, that his sermons were adorned with the beauty and redolent with the fragrance of flowers culled from the garden of inspiration; that he brought his Scripture proofs and illustrations, as classic quotations are by public orators, to grace a speech, and to convey the speaker's idea in the apposite language of high authority!

As to the "superficial peculiarities" of the book, the difficulty is in the opposite direction, I fancy. The Bible may be somewhat too deep for your understanding! How is it? Centuries ago, a learned man compared the Scriptures to a river with fords so shallow that a lamb might *wade*, and gulfs so deep that an elephant might *swim*! The *fords*, after all, may be the safest for you; but I commend to your notice the *gulfs*, just as a quiet antidote to *pride*. There is no difficulty in finding them, as they will meet you at every turn after you leave the *fordable* passages! For my part, I glory in those parts of inspiration which compel me to exclaim, with holy Paul, "*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*" Both these peculiarities of Scripture are convincing proofs of the wisdom and benevolence of God.

"The repetitions of which you complain, arise, in part, from the Scriptures being divided into two parts, the Old and the New Testament, each belonging to different dispensations, and designed mutually to illustrate each other; and from the fact, besides, that some of the writers describe the same event, sometimes, indeed, from a different stand-point. But while they harmonize in the general facts, there is much variety in the details, one noticing what the other for some reason omitted. This, to me, is a deeply interesting peculiarity. Have you never noticed after any great event or catastrophe has occurred, how eagerly successive newspapers are read, and with what patience people will read over a fresh version of the circumstances? and though half a column or a column may differ but little from what they had read before,

yet if a few items are found there, not previously known, they feel amply repaid. We have noticed something similar in courts of law, in the examination of witnesses.

That the New Testament is *veiled* in the Old, and the Old Testament is *revealed* in the New, you should always remember when reading the Scriptures. A large portion, however, of the New Testament is indeed new, and differs greatly from the Old Testament, of which there are about *two hundred and sixty* passages cited in the New, and always for evident purposes—chiefly the unfolding of God's counsels in the fulfilment of prophecy.

The departments of inspiration which you consider “*encumbrances*,” are usually as necessary to the whole, as the *walks* are to your fine garden. We cannot do without them. Their *absence* would be greatly detrimental, and very far from adding to our comfort in our excursions through the pleasing shades of revelation. I do confess that I sympathize with Luther's declaration, that for the whole world he would not that *one leaf* should be lost from the Bible; and also with Latimer, who said, “I would be ruled by God's book, and rather than depart from one jot of it, I would be torn by wild horses!” In all that relates to faith and *practice*, and *where moral principle and precept* are involved, and not in things *indifferent*, as forms and ceremonies, who can doubt the propriety of his resolve?

It is perilous to tamper with a chart, is it not? Those parts which may be of little importance to one captain, may be of the highest importance to another. The Chart of the New Dispensation does not render unnecessary that of the Old. A chart of the Atlantic will not indeed suffice him who is threading the coral reefs of the Pacific Ocean. The authorized

chart for those seas must be consulted ; but the former chart, in some of its bearings, may be of some use under circumstances ; nor will he presume to spread a sail upon the former ocean, in coasting especially, without the chart which belongs to it. Can you make the application ?

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Suppose a family habitually to close their doors and windows against the light of heaven, preferring candle-light, or gas-light, as more agreeable and suitable for the transaction of household affairs, what would you think of their judgment ? Would you advise your family to follow their example ? But *revelation* is a light from heaven ! The light of *reason*, when compared to that, is but as the light of a *candle* to the *sun* ! A family preferring the glimmerings of reason to the light of the Bible is a deistical family, to say the least. If such be your family, I pity you ! To call this “ independence, and glory in it,” and dub your witty flashes “ arguments,” is, to use a phrase of a friend of mine, “ not only *ludicrous*, but *pitiable*.” It is, as the poet observes, to

“ Spike up your inch of reason on the point
Of philosophic wit, called argument,
And then, exulting in your taper, cry,
Behold the sun, and, Indian-like, adore ! ”

Ay ! adoring not only your taper, but some fragments of morality, which true Christians—ay ! even the generality—have as well as yourself and family ; but a *system* of morality in every-day practice, to which, I venture to say, neither you nor your household would be willing to conform—simply, the entire morality enjoined in the New Testament ; which consists,

as Paul declares, of "*whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report.*" Nor is it of any use for you to point to a few backsliders, in and out of Zion, or deceived or deceiving professors. There are some thousands of real Christians in this town, whose characters will bear your closest comparison with the above apostolical rule!

By the way, do you remember reading an extract from a well-authenticated letter of the late Hon. John Randolph? That famous and somewhat eccentric gentleman, when writing a letter to a friend, one early morning, by candle-light, on looking around was surprised to find his room filled with the light of day. Now mark, he was not a professor of religion. After extinguishing his candles, he closed his letter by remarking on the trifling incident, that in the presence of day-light, had he continued to write by the light of his *candles*, the presence of the king of day would have very soon rendered them remarkable only for that dirt and ill savor which betray all human contrivances! And, referring to the subject on which he had been writing, he added, "*Morality is to the Gospel, not even as a farthing candle to the light of the blessed sun!*" Ponder the remark, will you?

But, to return to your "statements," what have you stated that was not found in the Bible centuries before you were born? It requires all my patience, I must confess, to find men laying down principles of right and wrong, and exulting in them as new discoveries, and worthy of being set in print, and added as a new chapter to divine revelation, when they are there already, and stated, too, in a much clearer manner, and in more beautiful and convincing language! Do, sir, be so kind as to indicate to me, in all you have written, a single point of right

or wrong not acknowledged in the book you consider so deficient. Nor do I stop here, but I apply the same to your statements on other themes! More than this: I will allow your inventive faculty one entire month to write about God, the human soul, and the properties of morals, and then I shall claim to declare, in favor of the Bible, that you have succeeded in adding nothing to what is recorded in that book upon these subjects!

These remarks, I am aware, are not particularly flattering to your "reason," and to "the light thereof." Nevertheless, if you did but perceive the *sarcasm* that lurks behind the idea of a man lighting his *candle* in order to see the sun, you might possibly be thankful that I have refrained from calling it forth against yourself! Allow me, however, to remind you, that had the *sun of revelation* never showered upon you with its beams, your *candle* would emit as uncertain a ray upon those themes, as that of Cicero, or Plato, who cautioned his hearers to expect nothing beyond mere *conjecture* regarding these things!

The Bible has removed the difficulties and uncertainties which so impeded those giant intellects of olden times in the investigations of such subjects. They had no "*Thus saith the Lord.*" Hence all was conjecture with them. You have the light of the Scriptures, and other aids besides: lift your eyes to the shelves of your fine library! Who but Christian authors wrote all that, or the greater part of it! It is not to be doubted you have consulted them frequently in bygone years. Can you deny that they have taught your reason how to shine? What a pity they did not succeed in teaching it to reverence the Bible—which, if I may be allowed the use of the phrase, is, next to God himself, "*the father of lights*" among authors!

A remark or two from the celebrated Locke may be of use to you in the present juncture. "He that travels the road now, applauds his own strength and legs, that have carried him so far in such a scantling of time, and ascribes all to his own vigor; little considering how much he owes to their pains who cleared the woods, drained the bogs, built the bridges, and made the ways passable, without which he might have toiled much with little progress!" He further observed, that a great many things which we have been bred up to the belief of from our cradles, and are now grown familiar (and as it were natural to us under the Gospel), we take for unquestionable, obvious truths, and easily demonstrable, without considering how long we might have been in ignorance of them had revelation been silent. And that many others are beholden to revelation who do not acknowledge it—that it is not diminishing to revelation, that reason gives its suffrage to the truths revelation has discovered; but it is our mistake to think that, because *reason* confirms them to us, we have the first certain knowledge of them from thence, and in that clear evidence we now possess them! This is all I have time to say at present.

CHAPTER LVIII.

TO THE SAME—THE HUMAN SOUL.



WHEN speaking of the character of infidels and various grades of skeptics, I meant their *general character*—the character of a vast majority of them, and not individual exceptions. We have known some, we admit, *quite moral*, loaded down with “*dead works*,” as St. Paul calls them—works which owe their existence to other principles altogether than the *faith* and love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord; some who disliked *vice* as much as they did *zeal* in religion, and who were as averse to *uncleanness* as to *holiness*! The whole truth came out after their conversion, that, as one remarked, they abhorred jail sins, but made no conscience of Gospel sins; refrained from gross sins and open sins, but were not ashamed to practise heart sins and secret sins. And would to God, dear sir, that even many of us professing Christians could quite clear ourselves in this matter.

“From sin and grief, from fear and shame,
I hide me, Jesus, in thy name!”

Augustine called some sins “*silken sins*,” but the thought alarmed him that a person might go to hell in silk as in cotton—that silk would burn as readily as sackcloth.

My “pulpit figures” I change as often as convenient, with-

out scruple ; and I have one appropriate to a nimble friend of yours, who seems somewhat ambitious to take the subject out of your hands. Be so kind as to ask him if he heard of that butcher who, a while since, lighted a candle, and quite forgot he had stuck it in his *hat*, and by the light of what he denied he went on searching for the candle, and, in the mean time, found the article which he wanted most, and for which he had lighted his candle ! That, I believe, is the story in a few words ! Your friend, like the butcher and his candle, has quite forgotten the *whereabouts* of the Bible upon such subjects, and yet, by the aid of that unacknowledged luminary, he has lighted upon some great truths, which, but for the aid of the mislaid Bible, he was never likely to stumble upon. I hope he will not be offended, but, in pondering his “great discovery,” I could not help thinking of the butcher and his candle !

Pagan philosophers have long had my admiration for some of their rich and spicy sayings. Yet, when reading some of their remarks, it is impossible for an intelligent Christian of the present day not to be aware that similar sayings, and in language more impressive, were recorded in a book called the Bible, ages before such philosophers came into the world ! However, one never blames them for not crediting a book which they never saw. It is only in our day, in matters of religious speculation, that we find *fac-similes* of the Athenian madman, who claimed every ship that came into port as his own, though he originated not a plank in one of them, nor owned a single *punt* in any port in Greece ! So much for *originality* !

If modern writers sustain their arguments upon the des-

tiny of man, in a manner more confident and convincing than the ancient pagan writers, it is fully accounted for in the fact that they write by the light of *revelation*. It is a great weakness in your friend to take pains, even to conceal it from himself—attributing that to *reason* which has been borrowed from *revelation*!

An agreeable example now occurs to me, of an honorable intellect of the last century, relating his own private reflections—one who stood high in the literary world, but who was never, I believe, assailed with the vanity of a single insinuation that he had ever discovered a single truth in morals or in religion, or in the science of mind, independent of divine revelation, or unsupported by it. And yet with what simplicity and beauty he reasoned upon the arguments available for the immortality of the soul, its immateriality, its passions, particularly its love of existence, its horror of annihilation, its hopes of immortality, its sweet satisfaction in the practice of virtue, and its secret uneasiness upon the commission of vice; and that the nature of the Supreme Being, his goodness, justice, wisdom, and veracity, are all as so many sacred pledges for the immortality of the soul.

His works I have not at hand to quote correctly, but I remember, in my younger days, how agreeably I was moved by his observations upon the perpetual progress of the human soul to perfection, without the possibility of ever arriving at it; and his argument for its immortality, drawn therefrom; that it was a mystery to him, how the thought could enter the human mind that a soul, so capable of immense improvement, and of receiving fresh accessions of knowledge to all eternity, should fall into nothing almost as soon as created!—could sup-

pose that such amazing attributes as the mind possesses have been created for no purpose. A *brute*, after living a few years, arrives at a point of perfection beyond which he cannot go, were he to live ten thousand more. Were the human soul, he continued, to stand still thus in her accomplishments, and her faculties evince incapacity for further enlargements, he could then imagine it might fall into insensibility in death, and drop at once into a state of annihilation. But to believe that a thinking being, in a state of perpetual progress of improvement, and travelling on from one point of perfection to another—after having just looked abroad into the works of its Creator, and made a few discoveries of his infinite wisdom and power—must perish at her first setting out, and in the very beginning of her inquiries!—the thought is preposterous! To him, he confessed, there was not a more pleasing and triumphant consideration in religion than this—the perpetual progress which the soul makes toward the perfection of its nature, without ever arriving at a period in it; to look upon a soul as going on from strength to strength—to consider that she is to shine forever, with new accessions of glory, and brighten to all eternity—that she is still adding virtue to virtue, and knowledge to knowledge—carries in it something wonderfully agreeable to that ambition which is natural to the mind of man. He even considered the prospect as pleasing to God himself, to see his creation forever beautifying in his eyes, and drawing nearer and nearer to him, by greater degrees of resemblance. The single consideration of the progress of a finite spirit to perfection, he argued, would be sufficient to extinguish all envy in inferior natures, and all contempt in superior; that the cherubim, which now appears as a god to a human soul, knows

very well that the period will come about in eternity, when the human soul shall be as perfect as he himself now is; nay, when she shall look down upon that degree of perfection as much as she now falls short of it. He admitted that the higher nature of the cherubim is, indeed, still in progression, and preserving his distance and superiority in the scale of being; but that he knows that how high soever the station is of which he stands possessed at present, the inferior nature will at length mount up to it, and shine forth in the same degree of glory. With what astonishment and veneration, he added, may we look into our own souls, where there are such hidden stores of virtue and knowledge, such inexhaustible sources of perfection!

I had no notion of dwelling so long in company with this pleasing writer when I introduced him, but finding a few notes, taken from his writings years ago, folded up with other manuscript, I considered them too good to be withheld from the notice of yourself, especially your friend, if he have patience to read them. He concluded, if my notes do not deceive me, with the following sweet thoughts: that we know not yet what we shall be, nor will it ever enter into the heart of man to conceive the glory that will be always in reserve for him; that the *soul*, considered with its Creator, is like one of those *mathematical lines* that may draw nearer to another for all eternity, without a possibility of touching it; and can there be a thought so transporting as to consider ourselves in these perpetual approaches to Him, who is not only the standard of perfection, but of happiness?

But who is this that writes so convincingly and so charmingly of the powers and prospects of the human soul? Who else but a *Christian philosopher*? "one who drank deep at the

fountain of human knowledge, without dissolving the pearl of his salvation in the draught!" None but one well acquainted with the sacred volume could have mastered such thoughts. The wisest and the best of heathen philosophers, even in the palmiest days of Greece and Rome, could not attain unto them. That they have, in some instances, verged upon some of these points, I will not deny, and, it would seem, almost treated them as certainties. But alas! how soon do we find them blurring them over, if not with contempt, yet with unconcealed doubt, and utter uncertainty; even Cicero himself might be cited as an instance. Nor do I remember, just now, meeting with a single sentiment, either in the writings of the Peripatetici, or in those of Aristotle their master, that could be construed indisputably in favor of those sentiments already credited to a Christian writer.

As for the Epicureans, their motto was, "When death is, we are not." Pliny, after all his investigations, cuts the whole matter short at a stroke: "The soul and body have no more sense after death than before we were born." Tully, it is true, made some pleasing remarks on Scipio's dream, where he introduces the soul of a *departed father*, who he supposed had gone to heaven, encouraging his son to do service for his country, from his own notable example when alive; and basing his encouragement, as one from the spirit-land, on the most sure and certain place being reserved in heaven for those who procure weal for their country, either by freeing it from peril or increasing its happiness!

It is not, dear sir, by the glimmerings of ancient heathenism, any more than by the rush-light of modern deism, that the mind can be qualified for such an investigation. The geol-

ogist who would critically examine *strata* of a given region of country, and ascertain the nature of those rocks and earths which seem to solicit the testimony of science, prefers the aid of the *sun* to rush-light, star-light, moon-light, or even torch-light. We may say the same regarding the light of *revelation*, for the proper understanding of the subjects in question. "I will take the map of Ireland, and lay it before me, and make mine eyes schoolmasters, to give my understanding to judge of your plot," said the old character in Spenser. The light by which he examined that map was not material to him. Not so with the man who drew it; as *sun-light* is preferable to moon-light or candle-light, in obtaining a correct delineation of the surface of a country, even with no more sun than that which on a certain morning dawned over the scenery of Eden:

"The sun, scarce uprisen,
Shot parallel to the earth his dewy ray,
Discovering in wide landscape all the east
Of Paradise, and Eden's happy plains!"

But, in matters of religion, the reader as well as writer needs the light of Scripture. Indeed, there is no safety without it.

* * * * *

The *nimbleness* of your sophisms betrays their own lightness to others, while they deceive yourself! Æsop tells us of extremely wise frogs which had a great mind to some water, but they would not leap into the well, because they could not get out again! But they were too wise to deny there was water down there, and good water, too! An observation of an ac-

complished *critic* occurs to me, not unworthy of your consideration—that it is no uncommon thing for men in a confined circle of life, who have entered late upon important studies, to find new ideas, new to them, and, by their unlettered acquaintance, bear so strongly upon their mind that their understanding is darkened by excessive light—that in this state they are apt to speak of them in amazement, and, from their agitation, fancy they have never been laid open to others! It might shock you were I to give you too strong an assurance that there are some plain people in this town who would not be backward in proving that your “discoveries” are nothing more than “old heresies newly vamped!” When in the house of one of these, the other day, I happened on the following among his books, penned and printed centuries ago, by one of the old poets. After reading the piece over, I trust you will have sufficient candor and humility to admit that, at least in some “departments of invention,” there is really nothing new under the sun :

“ One thinks his *soul* is air ; another fire ;
 Another blood diffused about the heart ;
 Another saith the elements conspire,
 And to her essence each doth give a part.

“ Some think one *general soul* fills every brain,
 As the bright sun sheds light on every star ;
 And others think the name of soul is vain,
 And that we only well-mixed bodies are !

“ In judgment of her *substance* thus they vary,
 And thus they vary in judgment of her seat :
 For some her chair up in the *brain* do carry,
 Some thrust it down into the *stomach's* heat !

“ Some place it on the root of life—the heart ;
Some in the liver, fountain of the veins ;
Some say she's all in all, and all in part ;
Some say she's not contain'd, but all contains.

“ Thus the great clerks their little wisdom show,
While with their *doctrines* they at hazard play,
Tossing their *light opinions* to and fro
To mock the lewd, as learned in this as they.

“ For why should we the busy soul believe,
When boldly she concludes of that and this,
When of *herself* she can no judgment give,
Nor how, nor whence, nor where, nor what she is?”

CHAPTER LIX.

TO ——— : A BRUSH WITH AN INFIDEL.



MAN in a fit of obstinate melancholy, insisted that he had two *devils* in his head ; but happily, between the two an idea found room that a certain person could cure him, and nobody else. On applying to the individual, he told him his sad story, and added that he had just been bidden by one of the devils to kill him. That he became a little nervous you will not wonder. Maintaining his self-possession, however, and discerning the man's case, he cheerfully prepared a remedy : a small piece of paper folded neatly in shining silk, and suspended by a string from his neck, to which he added some necessary advice regarding his *manner of living*, to which was added the most important injunction of all, to "say his prayers before he went to bed every night." The man soon got well, and had no return of his disorder.

The devil in the head I have sometimes suspected to be the origin of certain blasphemous notions, with which some people, much to my annoyance, are afflicted ! If it be so, he is often *exorcised* from thence by the power of the Holy Spirit and the force of truth ! But to the point in hand : I reserve the right of judgment as to how far I may proceed in detailing the opinions which it is necessary to assail. A clear array of *truth* may sweep them from the field, before a congregation

has time to inspect the colors and weapons of the opposing *squadrons*. It is the *truth* I desire the people shall remember, and not *error*. Thus far my spiritual tactics, as a general rule; but "circumstances alter cases," you know. If at any time it is otherwise, there are satisfactory reasons; that is all. The remark of a shrewd man is applicable: "If *owls* will not be hooted at, let them keep close within the tree, and not perch upon the upper boughs!" which they usually have sense enough to do!

As to yourself, I rejoice that the *negation* of truth in your head has not been able to silence the voice of conscience, nor to satisfy the cravings of your *heart* for that which unbelief cannot supply—light, faith, peace, love, and holy joy! Your friend speaks of the Bible as nothing more than "a specimen of Oriental literature." Indeed! then we ought to have had the *whole* of it by this time! The light of morning dawn is oriental light, is it not? But is it anything the worse for that? The *sun* comes down from the east, and is therefore an *oriental sun*, but we do not prize him any the less for that! He would be considered a fool who would argue from that circumstance that the sun is not adapted to enlighten and warm and bless the west and the north. The sun, like the Bible, springs from the east; but as nobody could make us believe that we have not the whole sun in the west, so none can cause us to doubt, that if the Bible be "Oriental literature," it is not a *sample*, but the *whole* of it, as it regards the Godhead, man, morals, and true religion, and as admirably adapted to the wants of the moral world as the sun is to our natural world. But this is only another blow at the Gospel, seeing that it has come to us from the same direction.

The sages of Greece and Rome are the perplexity of modern infidels, who are fond of quoting them as examples of what the intellect of man could achieve without the Bible—any thing to get rid of the Bible and its divine authority. “Those who no longer exist can no longer suffer,” was one of their axioms, chiefly used for the purpose of arming their disciples against the fear of death. But on occasions not a few they had juster ideas of man and his destiny. A consciousness of great mental power in themselves, and an inability to trace in matter the properties of mind, led them to some very beautiful conclusions, which, alas! were dissolved and dissipated in their next course of reasoning! One has only to appeal to the writings of Cicero regarding these philosophers, to dispel the illusion, and undermine and silence those infidel batteries thrown up in modern times against the Scriptures.

In the summer of 1835, when journeying between Albany and Whitehall, in the State of New York, part of it was performed in one of the old stage coaches, so fast disappearing from the roads. We soon found we had a determined deist among us, an intelligent man, and ready for an attack on Christianity when opportunity offered, for which he had not long to wait. Opposite to him sat a gentleman, an entire stranger to me, of refined and cultivated manners, and fine conversational powers. The interchange of thought between these two became quite animated and interesting. All but these were silent. The deist was cornered sooner than he expected, and seemed in danger of losing his temper. He despised the Bible, and considered it “an assuming and useless book;” and strongly insisted that the ancient pagan philosophers, as some called them, reasoned quite as well upon the existence of a God, and

the nature of the human soul, as those who have boasted so largely of having the vantage ground afforded by the Bible. "Be so kind, sir," said his opponent, "to favor us with some specimens of their mode of reasoning?" He did so, with considerable tact and readiness; exclaiming, as he concluded, "What can be clearer than all this? Why send your agents among a people who have been favored with such lights and literature as we have but glanced at?" With admirable ingenuity and force, he was met with the reply, that those heathen sages had not proposed a single truth that we find not in the Bible, and stated there with much more clearness and certainty, and clothed with a beauty of language much superior to anything yet noticed in their writings; that the best we could say of his authors was that they wrote as well as could be expected under the circumstances; that, were it not for the mortifying contradictions found in the sentiments and opinions even of the same men, they might well win our admiration: writing as they did by the light of their natural reason, which, in comparison of the light of divine revelation, was as the light of the moon to the dazzling splendor of the sun, they deserve credit for having done so well. But if he thought people would be willing, in our times, to be set back to think and write under the *glimmer* decreed to them, in preference to the glorious light of Gospel day with which we are favored, he was grievously mistaken; as well might he suppose that people would prefer *moonlight* instead of *sunlight* for the transaction of business. He went on to inquire of the deist whether, if his pagan sages made out so well under the *moonlight of reason*, it might not be presumed they would have written yet better and nobler things under the *sunshine of rev-*

elation? How could he avoid the admission, seeing that he could not assign one *new truth*, regarding God, or the soul, or morals, not already recorded in the Bible, and recorded *there* ages before some of his ancient worthies were born, proved by evidence most indisputable, from the pages of antiquity?

The deist, it was evident, had never before viewed matters exactly in this light, and became somewhat too warm in dispute, but without proper material to maintain his ground. The Christian religion came in for its share of reproach, arising from the misconduct of some of its professors. This, as we expected, brought out the Christian gentleman to delineate the character of *pagan religion* and of its professors. This was a troublesome theme to the deist. For it was plain the religion of the Gospel absolutely prohibited such follies as some of its professors do commit from time to time; whereas the religion to which his pagan sages belonged countenanced the most obscene rites and the grossest immoralities; and, besides, the gods they worshipped were of the basest character, and examples of the grossest sensuality.

It is out of my power to do justice to the talent displayed in this exciting debate; and, as I took no notes at the time, I do not pretend to give the exact language: I only write from the pleasing impression left upon my mind, which abided most sweetly for many a day. The deist endeavored to maintain his ground obstinately; but what could he do? Even Cicero himself owning, "If we could come into the world in such circumstances as that we could clearly and distinctly have discerned nature herself, and have been able in the course of our lives to follow her true and uncorrupted directions, this alone might have been sufficient, and there would have been

little need of teaching and instruction ; but now the light of nature has given us only *some small sparks of right reason*, which we so quickly extinguish with *corrupt opinions* and *evil practices* that *the true light of nature nowhere appears ;*" and the venerable Jamblicus, besides, " It is manifest that those things are to be done which are pleasing to God ; but what they are it is not easy to know, except *a man were taught them by God himself, or by some person who had received them from God himself, or obtained the knowledge of them by SOME DIVINE MEANS.*" What deist could withstand such testimonies as these ? or reply to such wants and longings after something more certain and infallible in matters of *faith* and *practice*—even by some of his much-admired pagan worthies ?—so undeniable is the admission of the felt want of an inspired *revelation* from heaven.

There can be no doubt that such admissions were but *echoes* to those which had prevailed in the minds of "the great souls," as Socrates called them, who had lived ages before them, and of others who were their contemporaries. Add to this those raking observations of Locke, though a modern and a believer in the Bible, who, for the sake of argument, allowed that to be granted which he admitted not to be true—that all the moral precepts of the Gospel were known to somebody or other amongst mankind before. But where, or how, or of what use, is not considered. Suppose they may be picked up here and there—some from Solon and Bias in Greece, others from Tully in Italy, and, to complete the work, let Confucius, as far as China, be consulted, and Anarcharsis the Scythian contribute his share—what will all this be to give the world a *complete morality* that may be to mankind an

unquestionable rule of life and manners, such as that we possess with the Bible in our hands? Could the saying of Aristippus or Confucius give it an authority? Was Zeno a lawgiver (he inquired) to mankind? If not, what he or any other philosopher delivered was but a saying of his. Mankind might hearken to it or reject it; they were under no obligation: the opinion of this or that philosopher was of no authority! So much for Locke! As to the deist, he sallied out "on his own hook," to prove that he himself could surpass any of the ancient heathen in reasoning upon any or all of these subjects, entirely independent of the Bible!

We listened, of course, with much curiosity, as he warmed into zeal and eloquence, gave the back of his hand to all Scripture, and pushed his argument to what he considered a brilliant and triumphant conclusion! But it was evident he owed most of his elevated thoughts to the very Bible he had so contemptuously rejected. His opponent asked him to hold up a little—that he could not allow him to canter off at that rate, in the use of ideas drawn from the Holy Scriptures, indifferent to the moral honesty which required an acknowledgment of his source of information!—that he cut as ridiculous a figure as the man who would light a candle, and, turning his back upon the glorious sun in the sky, should run along, calling upon all his neighbors to observe and see how he could show them the beauty and majesty of the surrounding scenery, but says not a word about the sun that was doing all this before he lighted his candle, and which at the moment is irradiating the whole landscape with his beams—that such was the folly of our deist scampering off, *rush-light* of infidelity in hand, and his back toward the sun of revelation, so evidently shower-

ing him with its beams! he all the while protesting his independence of that divine luminary! "See! see! what a blaze of light I can create!" exclaims the man, while the broad sun of revelation is blazing behind him!


A few more pointed remarks drove the deist from his ground, and he began to pour contempt upon *priests* of all sorts. The gentleman replied that he held the ministers of the Gospel, of all denominations, in very high esteem, and that anything he might have to say about a few who had disgraced their profession, could not possibly change his good opinion of the rest; that he had a high respect for this class of his fellow-citizens. The debate closed, and the deist observed to one near him that he suspected the gentleman was a minister himself, and that had he known that at the beginning he would have shunned the encounter!

This little episode recalled that noble defence of Tertullian, in ancient times, against the attacks which the Gospel was then sustaining from heathen critics, in those early ages of Christianity. "Which of your *poets*," said he, "which of your *sophists* have not drunk from the fountains of the prophets? It is from these sacred sources likewise that your *philosophers* have refreshed their thirsty spirits; and if they found anything in the Holy Scriptures to please their fancy, or to serve their hypotheses, they turned it to their own purpose, and made it serve their curiosity, not considering these writings to be sacred and unalterable, nor understanding their sense; every one taking or leaving, adopting or remodelling, as his imagination led him. Nor do I wonder that the philosophers played such foul tricks with the Old Testament, when I find some of the same generation among ourselves, who have made as bold with the

New, and composed deadly mixtures of Gospel and opinion, led by a philosophizing vanity." It seems difficult to persuade infidels in our times how much they owe to the Scriptures in their manner of exalting *natural religion*, as they call it.

CHAPTER LX.

REPLIES TO HEARERS.

O the inquiry concerning "*religious gayety*," etc., I reply, *seriousness* is highly becoming in a Christian. All nature seems to be serious—the rolling thunder and its lightning; the flower at your feet as you walk in the fields, and the remotest star; the tombstones, and the church spire stretching heavenward above them; and countless other things around and over us, are serious; and why should not we, with destinies so tremendous at stake, and eternity so near? There is a "*gayety*," if you will so name it, which is even enjoined in Scripture; but not such as the world esteems, but that which is akin to "*Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in your hearts.*" Such, and such only, have a right to be gay. All other classes of our fellow-men, who pretend to gayety, resemble a parcel of men in prison under sentence of death, attempting to be gay! Ponder the glowing sentiments of the seraphic Young:

“Retire, and read thy Bible, to be gay;
There truths abound of sov'reign aid to peace:
Ah! do not prize them less because inspired,
As thou, and thine, are apt and proud to do.
If not inspired, that pregnant page had stood
Time's treasure! and the wonder of the wise!”

Those other "fancies" were rightly named. I noticed some children the other day amusing themselves in creating and floating away *soap bubbles*; very fine things they appeared, vying with the rainbow as they sailed in the air; and the children clapped their hands, their eyes sparkled, and they were mightily pleased; but a slight puff of wind dissolved them into a dirty drop of water, and the glory disappeared. Older children have their bubbles too; but they do what children will not—risk their souls' eternal interest upon them. Nothing but fancies, mere fancies, my friend, having no solidity, nor foundation in the realities of Scripture truth. A breath of Scripture would dissolve any of them. Like the fanciful pleasures of the world, too, their dissolution only shows of what they were made, and how they sully the soul that dallies with them.

Be not offended; but apply it, if you know where it may; if not, drop it. But one now in eternity observed, "If a man fancy he shall die like a dog, no one need marvel that he lives like a dog, snarling for the bones of worldly vanities, which even children contemn." Ay, sir! and how many such have I seen acting like dogs, barking at what they could not understand, or did not wish to understand, their ill nature quite forbidding them! They are to be pitied, for they do not seem to be aware, that in carrying their instincts too far, they only win from some a dog's respect—the dread of which, let me tell you, holds many a skeptic in check. In doing so, he is very well aware he secures for himself the confidence and respect of men whose good opinion is worth something, even for this present world; and that the contrary course would sink him in their estimation—as

“Useless while he lives, and when he dies
Brings into doubt the wisdom of the skies.”

2. “*An honest skeptic*” will, we hope, exercise patience, and allow us the liberty he claims for himself, that of “*free thinking*” and “*freedom of speech*.” Far was it from my thoughts to excite *employers* against persons in their employ! I only stated a fact which few present doubted, that such have a better foundation for trust where a servant believes the Bible and fears God than if he did not. Can you doubt it yourself? “But such statements and invidious distinctions ought not to be made in the pulpit.” Why not? Truth is never out of place in the pulpit. I only stated a fact, and, although I would deprecate hypocrisy for worldly advantage, as much as yourself, yet I rejoice over any fact that may compel infidelity to hide its head, and betake itself to the darkness which best becomes it. Take no offence where none was intended. This, as society is now constructed, must be the prevailing sentiment, whether the pulpit be silent or no. If your infidelity inspire you with faith in some future *revolutions* to be effected by it in the state of society, why, sir, as the Christian has to live by faith, drawing all the comfort from it that he can, I see not but *you* must try to do the same!—ay! and sing with those in “*Club No. 1*”—

“There are better days a-coming, boys!
There are better days a-coming!”

If certain of your company propose to offer some annoyance on this account, I suppose I must bear it patiently, like a Christian; but it will surely be made to recoil upon them by Divine Providence. They had better not be over hasty. I

repeat it again, I had no intention to create suspicion nothing of the sort. The *sting* of the remark lay in its truthfulness. It was but the echo of sentiments more frequently uttered between partners in business and *committees* of corporations than you or your party seem aware of—that corrupt, un-Christian, and anti-Bible principles afford but an indifferent basis for trust, or guarantee for faithfulness. Cases of deception, arising from gross hypocrisy, may occur, and do occur; nevertheless, by the good providence of God, this foundation stands yet sure in the minds of capitalists and employers. They return to it after every shock, as if it were a settled principle, that whatever be their own moral character, there is a surer basis for trust on this principle than any other. That they hope, in some cases, and trust an infidel servant, I will not deny; but their hope lies in this, that he has a sufficient sense of honor *to live above his principles*—certainly not in the principles themselves. I tell you now, and you need not go far to find such, there are gentlemen who have their eyes upon such free thinkers and free talkers, ay, though they say but little, they have their eyes open, and ears too. They think it well and safe to write over some characters what the turnpike man wrote over his gate:

“NO TRUST.”

That it is “disagreeable,” no one can deny; and perhaps an “unfounded prejudice,” may be equally true; but who is to blame? If men are not omniscient, can it be a fault to be *prudent*? That it is a preventive to *talent*, is more than likely; but to what but the true cause should we impute the depreciation? I have named it. The famous Burleigh was

severe enough : he advised never to trust any man not of sound religion ; and the reason he gave for this was, he that is false to God, never can be true to man. If your own conscience speaks of better things, permit me to congratulate your ability in rising above the principles you have professed—of proving that the stream may rise higher than the fountain !

3. *To another.* The name John is not found in the Old Testament—at least, I do not remember having met with it there ; nor does it occur more than twice in the New—that is my impression just now. If you have time you can search and satisfy yourself, although it is of but little importance. The two Johns to which I refer, are John the Baptist, and John the Evangelist. The former was once compared to the *morning star*, which ushered in the Gospel day—heralded the rising of “*the Sun of Righteousness*” upon our world ; the latter to the *evening star*, which appeared long after that *sun* had set in blood over Calvary, shining serenely and beautifully upon the seven churches of Asia till nearly the close of the first century of the Christian era.

The fable of “The Wandering Jew” is a poor comment upon John xxi. 22 : “*If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?*” and receives no countenance from any Christian authority, nor Jewish. The meaning of our Lord was, that the disciple of whom he spake should die a natural death, and not by martyrdom, as Peter and the other apostles—that he should remain upon earth until Jesus came for him, which he did, in the *ninetieth* or *one hundredth* year of his life.

“The Wandering Jew” is a myth—that is, an imaginary personage. And so is the Jew Ahasuerus, who, according to the legend, offered indignity to our Lord on his way to Cal-

vary—striking him with his foot in contempt, when he tottered and sank beneath the weight of his cross before the door of his dwelling; for which act he was condemned to be a restless fugitive over the earth, until the second coming of Christ. But what is every Jew but in a sense a “Wandering Jew”?—alien and fugitive among all nations he is; such are the Jews as a people, who cannot die or become extinct, until the Lord come again—until they acknowledge and receive Jesus Christ as their Messiah and King; when they shall be reinstated in more than their former glory!

* * * * *

4. I do not deny that Burleigh’s sentiment may be abused, and is often, by bigots, who not unfrequently are poor judges of what is “sound in religion.” Bigotry, it is notorious, has often stigmatized that as unsound which had as much to support its orthodoxy, or more, than its own creed? But the phrase “*false to God*” distinguishes Burleigh’s meaning, which signifies the denial of the truth of God’s own declarations in the Bible. “*He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar!*” (1 John v. 10.) Is this not being *false to God*? What reliance is to be placed upon any man who virtually calls his Maker a liar? Perhaps, sir, were you to speak out ail that is in your heart—all you know of yourself, and all that you know of others—it might become pretty evident that you are not so much at disagreement with Burleigh as supposed!*

* Yesterday, at the meeting of the Pennsylvania Bible Society in this city, one of the speakers, Dr. Brainard, related an incident of his student days, which made a strong impression upon his mind at the time. He had been on a visit to Pennsylvania, and attended a meeting of that

5. With regard to "the final destiny of the departed heathen who never heard of Christ," the Judge of all the earth has done right. That Christ "*tasted death for every man,*" and that "*he is the propitiation, not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world,*" is the unequivocal and undeniable testimony of the New Testament. How far the benefits thereof are extended to such as have lived and died without having heard of this boundless love of God, we must await the revelations of eternity to know. It is reasonable we should entertain strong hope upon the subject. That an impure and wicked soul shall enter heaven, be he heathen or anything else, we cannot believe. But against such in heathen lands, who have walked uprightly, according to the light vouchsafed unto them, we cannot believe that the gates of heaven will be closed; the universal atonement of Christ for the sins of the whole world must, however, be the prevailing cause. Who could read those touching remarks of Socrates to his sympathizing friends, before drinking that poisoned cup to which he was condemned by his prejudiced judges, without indulging such a hope? He was discoursing with them on the immortality of the soul. "Whether or no," continued the sage, "God will approve of my actions, I know not ;

society, over which the venerable Bishop White presided. On his return east, the captain of the boat on which he had taken passage had his trunk broken open and robbed of \$22,000. It was resolved to search the baggage of the passengers, and his trunk was taken into the cabin with others to be examined. When it was opened, and some of the clothing was removed, a Bible was seen. "Shut up the trunk," said the captain. "You need not look further; a young man who carries a Bible with him will not steal."—Philadelphia, Pa., May 3, 1860.

but this I am sure of, that I have at all times made it my endeavor to please him, and I have a good hope that this my endeavor will be accepted by him." It is widely different, depend upon it, with those who live and die impenitent under the Gospel.

The "Critique on the Bible" betrays both prejudice and careless reading. It reminds one of the "Book Notices" department of some periodical, where we find, frequently, crude and unworthy impressions, evidently gathered from the title-page of a book, and a hasty glance at the "Table of Contents," and not from a fair, patient, and faithful reading of the book; either deceiving the public through partiality for the author, or damaging the work through some prejudices against him, or from sheer carelessness. If they have not found time to read it, let them honestly say so, or return the book to the publisher.

A finer mind than either of us, I fancy, with superior advantages, was of quite a different opinion regarding the Bible. I refer to Sir W. Jones, who, on a blank leaf at the end of his Bible, after having read it carefully through, and with the deepest attention, left the following record: "I have regularly and attentively perused the Holy Scriptures, and am of the opinion that this volume (independently of its divine origin) contains more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatsoever age or language they may have been written. The unrestrained application of them to events which took place long after their publication, is a solid ground for belief that they are genuine productions, and consequently inspired." A great scholar said of

the Bible and Christianity, ages ago, that were he to begin once more to be a scholar, he would choose first to be a *Christian*; and that were he graceless, he would read the Bible, if from no other motive than the excellency of its matter, the strength of its arguments, and the wonderful variety in its style and story!—that whatever things are to be prized in authors generally, are but fragmentary: if we want to find the entire of all that is admirable and worth knowing, we must return to the Holy Scriptures!

He observed, further, that he would learn “Christ’s Gospel,” were it only for bare learning’s sake; to which he would add another fact, that the *fine-spun abstractions, extractions, subtilities, and demonstrations* of all learning were as nothing, when compared with that great mystery recorded in 1 Tim. iii. 16, in which, he declared, he found a study worthy even of a “Doctor Angelicus!” and demanding in the present world all the learning and intellect of the most gifted son of Adam.

Be not offended at my plainness. Your acquaintance with the themes you contemn with so much assurance, is evidently superficial. Job and Solomon found nothing equal to that *heavenly wisdom*, in the choicest cabinets of the *lapidaries* of their times. (Job xxviii. 15–20; Prov. iii. 13–15.) Nor is it likely they would alter their opinion were they upon the earth at the present time, especially as the *treasures* of the New Testament would be added to “wealth of preference.”

Judge Hale, in a letter to his son, observed, “There is no book like the Bible, for excellent learning, and wisdom, and use; it is want of understanding in them who think or speak otherwise.” Dr. Samuel Johnson, a little before he died, and in the silent watches of the night, beckoned to his bedside a young

gentleman who sat up with him during the night, and addressed him thus: "Young man, attend to the advice of one who has possessed a certain degree of fame in this world, and who will shortly appear before his Maker: read the Bible every day of your life." The celebrated Earl of Rochester, in his last illness, would frequently lay his hand upon the Bible, and say, "There is true philosophy; there is wisdom that speaks to the heart; a *bad life* is the only forcible objection to this book." Ponder this last sentence, and let me ask your conscience whether your objection to the Bible may not be traceable to the same cause?

The advice of another eminent gentleman, in a letter to his son, now lies before me: "Let me exhort you to read, with the greatest attention, both the Old and New Testaments; you will find your mind extremely becalmed in so doing, and every tumultuous passion bridled by that firm belief of a resurrection, which is so evidently marked out and impressed upon mankind by Christianity."

CHAPTER LXI.

TO THE SAME—THE BIBLE VINDICATED.



WELL! but is it not singular, on your principles, that God has given us a sun, whereby we may safely regulate our time-pieces, and yet has denied us a *revelation* of his will, whereby we may as safely regulate our opinions? What thinkest thou? But the Bible is our spiritual sun. It is to our minds and opinions what our natural sun is to our judgments and to our time-pieces; and, as D'Aubigné says, "A single ray of God's word, enlightens more than all the wisdom of man." Melancthon sweetly observed, "The Scriptures impart a marvellous light: it is the heavenly ambrosia." The Psalmist esteemed the commandments of God *above gold, yea, above fine gold*—that the *precepts of God are manifestly right*, and through them he was led to *hate every false way*. (Ps. cxix. 127, 128.)

The best way to answer your question, "But is the Bible from God?" is to ask another: Does the sun shine in the heavens? "It does!" exclaims one. But how do you know that? "How do I know it? It tells me so itself! I do not want a rush-light or a torch-light to show it me; or to know who put it there! Does the Bible come from God? It does; who tells me so? Its intrinsic excellencies prove it, and its

external beauties strengthen the proof." Suppose, sir, I admit the sentiment. "It is with our *judgments* as our watches; none go just alike, yet every one believes his own." And what of that? *there* is the sun! which is to blame, the sun or our watches? If the works are unclean, or the regulator has lost the command, it does not surprise us that the watch and the sun disagree; but would it not be foolish to argue from this that the sun is an unreliable standard of time? By *inattention* to the sun, men may allow their watches to go all wrong, but it would be ludicrous enough to hear such men *wrangling* as to which watch was right! The fault lies in their watches, or indifference to the true time indicated by "the king of day," rather than in that celestial luminary. The application to the Bible is so plain, and to the state of men's judgments, that enlargement seems needless.

This may be added, however: if *creed-makers* and the *self-opinioned* are foolish enough to neglect the sun of revelation, there is no good reason why you or I should do the same. If a few *watch-makers* in this city should choose to set their *regulators* at variance with the sun and in defiance of his noonday decision, would that be "a convincing argument" against the sun, or a good reason why we should be governed by their time-pieces? A minute or two might not be of much moment, but in the matter of half an hour, or an hour, a serious inconvenience and loss; but to mistake *day-dawn* for *noon*, or nine o'clock at night for nine in the morning, we would not be slow in renouncing such time-keepers, and regulating our own by the great chronometer which God has placed in the sky, out of the reach of men's hands! Supposing that we had taken due care to regulate our own *time-pieces* by the sun, should our neighbors be surprised

at our *confidence* as to possessing the *true* time? or that we should be somewhat zealous in bringing about a *uniformity* in the matter of time?

It is on this principle we account for the fact that the humble *peasant*, who reads his Bible and sincerely practises its teachings, stands usually so clear in the light of its doctrines, and so well proportioned in character; while some who are so far above and beyond him in wealth or learning, make such evident fools of themselves in matters of *doctrine*—to say nothing of the sad inequalities and inconsistencies so noticeable in their moral character! And so it was said of a pious and humble *goatherd* on the mountains of a far-distant land—one upon whose early days the sun of science never rose to illumine his intellect, attained an education from this book of God, which allied him to the celestial regions; and that those pure words of inspiration, baptized on his wild mountain-altar of devotions, had given him words more pure and lofty than his mountain prospect of stars—purer than the dark-blue heavens around him, when night threw her mantle over him and his goats and his mountains!

* * * * *

Ay! I agree with you there! the topographical correctness of the Scriptures is disturbing to men of your way of thinking. Had the Bible been written in any other country than where the scenes it describes transpired, the topographic mistakes would have been numerous—perhaps, as a shrewd brother observed, Mont Blanc had been substituted for Lebanon!

“Whose head in wintry grandeur towers,
And whitens with eternal sleet;

While summer, in a vale of flowers,
Is sleeping rosy at his feet."

But the truthfulness of its *topography* is one of its proofs, as well as its beauties. Keep your eyes open to this fact when reading the Scriptures.

Write freely—all that is in your heart. No offence whatever. Injure me you cannot; but, pray, do not injure yourself. For my part, I am much of the opinion of him who insisted that that faith stands but totteringly that stands only because men hear not what infidels say against it. I like the idea of another, that he valued not the mind that was stereotyped; but rather preferred the sort of mental type that could be changed when required—that will admit of additions and improvements, such as increased light and intelligence demand! Stillingfleet says it is not uncommon for weaker heads, when they see the battlements shake, to suspect that the foundation is not firm enough; and to conclude, if anything is called in question, that there is nothing certain!—a fruitful cause, I fancy, of the backslidings of some into secret or open infidelity, who seemed once to be well confirmed in the truths of religion.

But do not, I beseech you, contradict *facts* which are as patent on the pages of history as the sun and moon and stars in the firmament of heaven! The tendencies of such sentiments are inevitable. If men are so bad who as yet disavow them, what would they become were they to avow them! What *infidelity* can accomplish in a single *individual*, and in families and neighborhoods, and also in a nation, is no secret to the world. We may say of a prospective revival of it, as a writer did of a certain revolution, that it would not resemble a thun-

der cloud passing over the harvest field, which though it prostrated the crop, yet leaves the soil in its native fertility; but it is that which tears up and exterminates the soil itself!

I am willing, of course, to allow the liberty I take—of speaking or writing freely without offence. It is no argument against the Gospel that certain minds do not perceive its nature. A *jackdaw* would rather have a grub than a jewel; and a *dog* prefers a bone to a pearl, simply because he knows not its value! Every creature after his kind; every sinner after his tastes and tendencies. I sometimes say to those who prefer the society of the world (what Jesus calls “*the synagogue of Satan*”) to the privilege of belonging to the church, that they must not be surprised, if they will jump with the world, that they find some day they have jumped into hell! If you will jump thus with the infidels, look out for a similar calamity! A man lost a flock of lambs thus: Driving them over a bridge, something hindered their passage, and one of them leaped upon the parapet of the bridge, and, his legs slipping from under him, fell into the river. The rest, seeing him go over, followed at a jump, one after another, and the drowned were many. It was a great mistake in those dumb animals. Had they been endowed with reason, and been aware of the fate of those that had jumped before them, it would “have given them pause;” but they were as regardless of the shepherd’s voice as some of your sort are of the voice of the minister of God; thus they jumped after each other to destruction. There are numerous illustrations of this constantly occurring among sinners. Be awake to this fact when your companions are being thinned by death; it may be your salvation!

* * * * *

But can you deny the propriety of that old maxim, long current among generations who have passed away—never to risk the loss of a present advantage, unless you have a good prospect, nay, a strong certainty, of acquiring that which is superior? The present advantage of a real Christian is, that sudden death would be sudden glory. “What hath the world to equal this?” as the old song has it.

Conscience is a disagreeable monitor, when once aroused. I know, also, that light disturbs it—that it is more at ease in communion with darkness and deception than under the broad daylight of truth—unvarnished truth. You know the meaning of the hint, therefore I need say no more. You have read of that poor fellow in London, I suppose, who owed much money, and had much fear of his creditors? how that when walking the streets one evening, his cloak caught upon a tenter-hook, when he instantly turned, saying, “*At whose suit?*” He thought a bailiff had arrested him! There is, perhaps, no faculty of the soul more wide awake than *fancy*, when guilt lies heavy upon the conscience. Those who know, declare it much easier to stifle confession on the lips of conscience, than to prevent it from using its sting. A confession of sin to God, and forsaking it too, would soon be followed by mercy, through faith in Christ. How much better to take this course than lead such a life!

One observation more: You and your friends live in a free country; and, of course, you can hear or forbear, believe or disbelieve, as you choose. Nothing is easier than to avoid “this plague;” but whether you can avoid the plague of your own consciences, is another question. And then death is on the full march to meet you, and that fearful something beyond, which

something within tells you is waiting for you. Ah! sirs, these things puzzle the will, as Shakspeare says, and make most men willing rather to bear the ills they have, than fly to others which they know not of. And can you deny his conclusion?

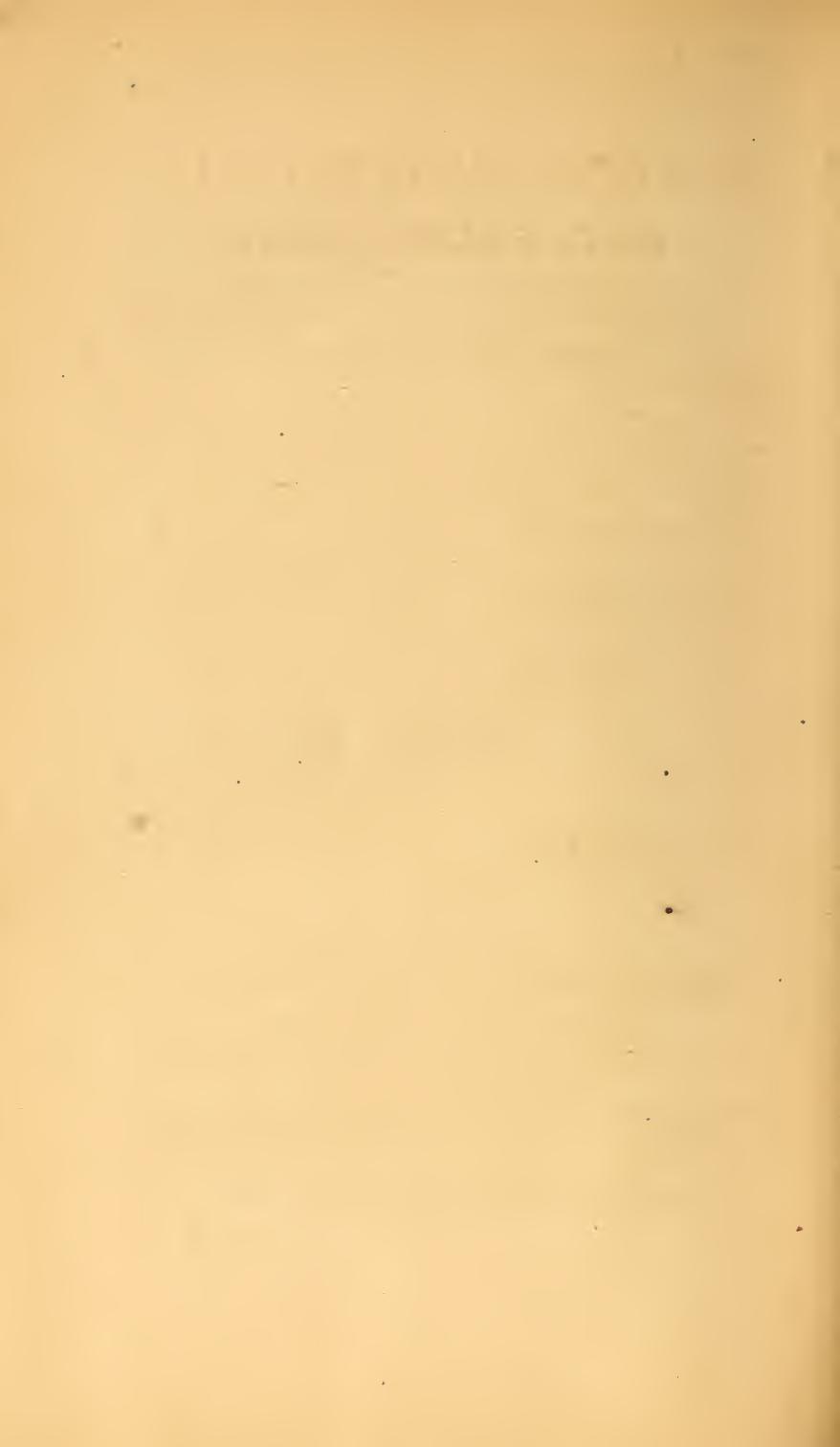
“Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all.”

As for Satan, I *fear* him too much, I confess, to be *ruled* by him. Much of their swaggering and boasting is mere bravado. Far more likely is it that what good Richard Baxter said to one in his day, is pretty applicable to most of you—that you are *afraid* enough of the devil, and the sight of him would make you tremble on your legs; and yet you are not afraid to be ruled by him, and to follow him to your destruction.

But Satan understands how to manage them. If he blinds the minds of those that believe not, now, as he did in the days of St. Paul, and we have no reason to doubt it, it is to conceal himself and his plans to ruin them, as well as to prevent the glorious light of the Gospel from shining unto them. Besides, he has a great ambition to imitate God. When it was necessary to prevent the men of Sodom from finding Lot's door, the Lord sent his angel and smote them with blindness, so that find it they could not, but kept stumbling one against the other. And when Satan would prevent his dupes from finding the door of mercy, or a way out of their prison-house, he despatches a *fiend* from perdition to smite them with *mental blindness*.

Poor sinners! we can only pity and pray for you; and if, when once out of doors, we are treated with a *laugh* for our

pains, we are still, through grace, enabled to pity and pray on. We have only to look a little distance beyond, to maintain the spirit of both prayer and patience. Meantime, we offer you mercy from your much-offended God—mercy through the blood of the Lamb! Oh! repent, believe, and be saved!



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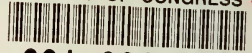
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